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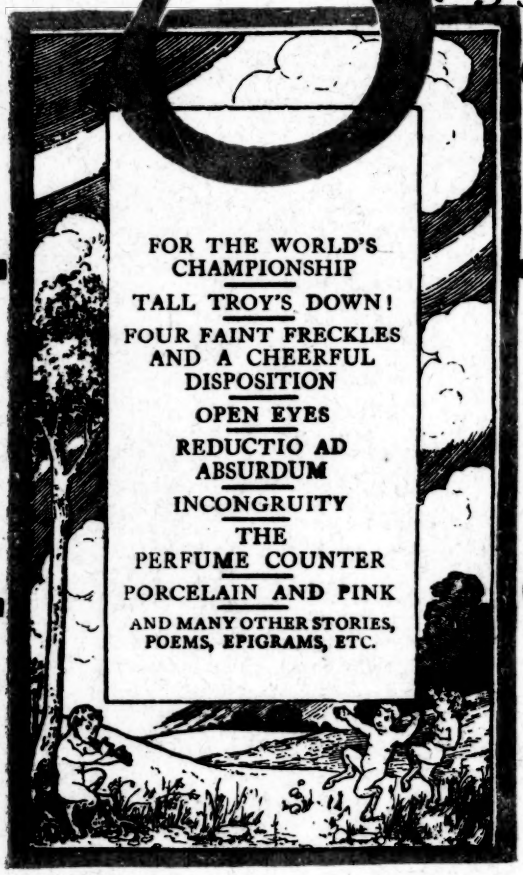
Vol 60

THE SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

To Amuse. Not to Instruct



FOR THE WORLD'S CHAMPIONSHIP

TALL TROY'S DOWN!

FOUR FAINT FRECKLES AND A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION

OPEN EYES

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

INCONGRUITY

THE PERFUME COUNTER

PORCELAIN AND PINK

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, EPIGRAMS, ETC.

JANUARY 1920

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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Editor—J. W. MILNE

JANUARY, 1920

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Annual Subscription, 15/- post free. Foreign Subscription, 16/- post free.

Published by THE ROLLS HOUSE PUBLISHING CO., LTD., Breams Buildings, E.C., for the Proprietor, J. W. Da Costa.

"The Smart Set" Magazine, Dane's Inn House, 265 Strand, W.C. 2 to which all editorial and advertising matter should be addressed.

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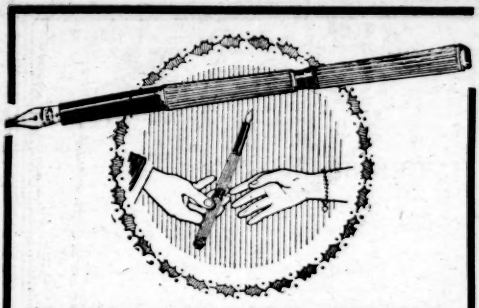

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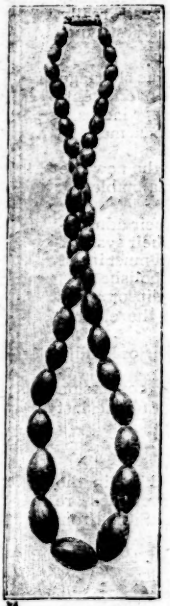

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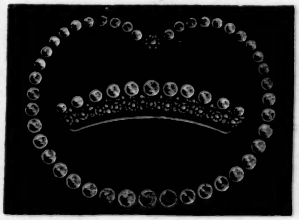

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By

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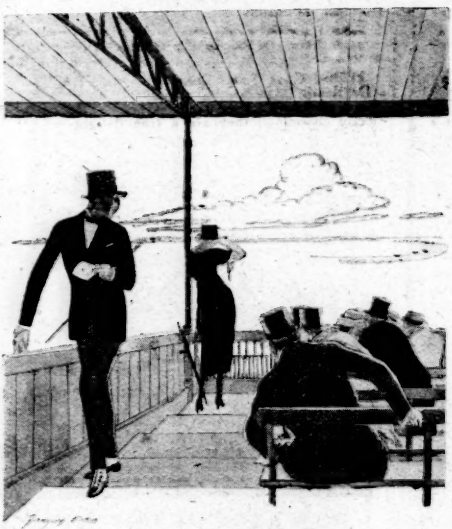

THE GRAND STAND

To meet the many requests, reproductions of some of this series of pictures, including "The Original Jass," "The Interrupted Jass," "The Beautiful Rag," and "Victory," are now published in Colour, 17" by 12", at 1s. each.

IT is a new emotion to feel, even for a moment, saintlike; to quell burning passion and speak in tones of gentleness.

But the changes of circumstances compel even the most inflexible of us to modify our determinations. Only the senile and the hidebound refuse to admit of change.

And so I proceed with my reparation.

Some time ago I announced my decision to devote the whole of the cloth at the disposal of my House to the clothing of Youth. And with sadness of heart I was compelled to refuse to provide body coverings for clients over fifty.

That was when there was a serious shortage of wool—and also brains and beer—and Youth having slaved and suffered for years in cold and muddy khaki, seemed to me to have first claim on warmth.

And patriotically though the old men "did their bit"—and held it in their teeth throughout the war—the fatty chest, the prosperous paunch, and podgy limbs of Age were really cloth consumers of the grossest type.

* * * * *

But since last Spring the shortage has been less acute; the Government, perhaps, has fleeced more "lambs."

And Dr. Veronoff has made a great experiment.

The outburst of enthusiasm with which the old men have greeted the discovery of the new use for the interstitial gland of the monkey has shown that even they are not wholly irreclaimable.

I welcome the tribute to Youth, and modify my rule.

This House is henceforth prepared to accept as clients old men who have proved their admiration of Youth by permitting a respectable young monkey's gland to be introduced into their system.

I do not wish to be uncharitable in these times of peace and plenty of taxation, but I must insist on a "respectable" monkey. This should not be difficult as monkeys are often very polished.

Respectability is necessary, for the introduction of the interstitial gland of a dipsomaniac gorilla or amatory chimpanzee might have deplorable effects. The last stage of the elderly graftee might become even worse than the first.

I have no desire to see a grafted octogenarian climbing lamp-posts in Pall Mall, or wildly pursuing innocent maidens down Piccadilly. At any rate, not in my trousers.

Therefore, those elderly cultivators of Youth who desire to take advantage of my concession must be prepared to produce a certificate as to the moral character and refined habits of the last owner of the gland. And they both have my sympathy. Hence the reprieve.

* * * * *

It is really very amusing that Pope and Bradley have the greatest business of its kind in the West End, considering the House is compelled to keep so many away. Perhaps the clothes are good. Tweed Lounge Suits from £10 10s. Dress Suits from £16 16s. Dinner Suits from £14 14s. Overcoats from £10 10s.

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DECAYING TEETH AND THE DILATORY

The Beauty of Perfect Teeth.

TIME and again people read and hear rather pointed remarks concerning false teeth—pointed as well as unromantic, but nevertheless true. This being so, the question is—Why on earth do most of us allow our teeth to decay from day to day, week to week, and even year to year, only to suffer the penalty of having to wear false teeth for the rest of our days?

Modern science has made the filling, bridging, and preservation of teeth an absolutely painless operation: at least, modern dentistry as practised by that celebrated dental specialist, MR. GOLDBERG, OF ANGLO-AMERICAN REPUTATION, whose dental surgeries are at 27, NEW CAVENDISH STREET, HARLEY STREET, LONDON. His method of repairing teeth is as painless as his method of extracting them, when extractions are positively necessary, for he staunchly discourages the pulling of teeth if there is the slightest chance of building them up and making them perfect again.

Dilatoriness is, perhaps, the greatest cause of the decayed condition of our teeth. From day to day, week to week, and month to month, people put off that promised visit until pain drives them to distraction. On the other hand, the excruciating pain could be prevented and the tooth made perfect in a few minutes by having the cavity cleaned and filled. But no! Decay is allowed to expose the nerve. Another cause is that fear which most of us have of the buzzing, boring drill. Banish that fear at once, for Mr. Goldberg's method of modern dentistry reduces that sensation to a negligible minimum. In America one enters a dental parlour and has his or her teeth repaired in very much the same way as one enters any of our big stores on this side to purchase a pair of gloves. Over there the timely filling of teeth has become a habit. Consequently false teeth are becoming most rare in the States. Then, too, Mr. Goldberg's new process of "bridging teeth" enables one to have two, three, or even four false teeth fitted in a row, perfect, everlasting, and without the use of a plate. The bridge is so constructed as to be invisible, while holding every tooth fast to the gums, which in a very little while grow down between the teeth, absolutely defying detection of the fact that such teeth are false.

The following is, perhaps, the cleverest piece of dental work performed by Mr. Goldberg. The tooth had been allowed to decay, and had broken off to the very root, and, in this condition, the patient went to have it extracted. Did he extract it? Not he. At once he killed the nerve, filed the broken root level just past the gum, so that it slightly hung over the root of the tooth. Then he prepared a false top, which was fastened to the root by a pin, and cemented. The joint where the false tooth met the root was surrounded by a band of gold, and the operation was completed as painlessly as you please, and within a few weeks the gum had grown down in its natural position over the gold band. It is now absolutely impossible to detect that the patient has a false eye-tooth, which is good for another twenty years. This is mentioned just as an example of how skilfully and neatly teeth are treated nowadays, and Mr. Goldberg's fees are reasonable, notwithstanding the fact that his elaborate parlours are in the midst of the world's specialist's district.

N.B.—Please note MR. GOLDBERG'S only address is 27, New Cavendish Street, Harley Street, London. and his HOURS are from 10 to 6.—'Phone number, Mayfair 2022.—(ADVT).

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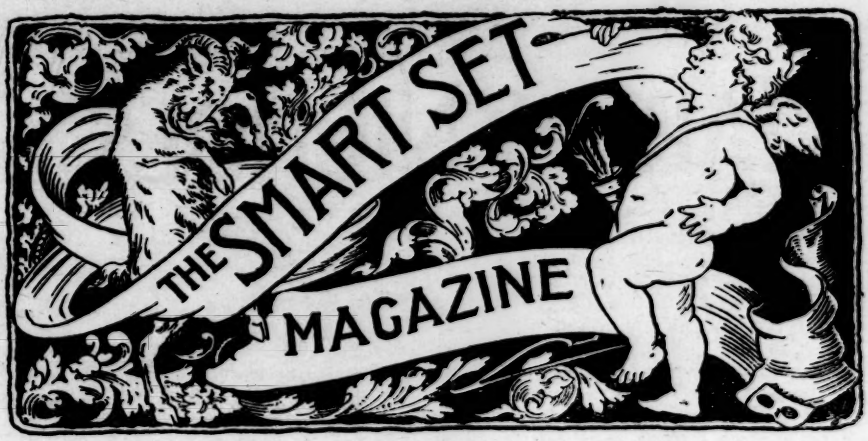

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TALL TROY'S DOWN!

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

CHAPTER I

THEODORE SCOTT, as he strolled with his big dog about his grounds, commented proudly, half to himself and half to the beast at his heels:

"Beautiful place! It couldn't be improved on."

He halted, the fingers of one hand imprisoned in his waistcoat pocket; with the other hand he rolled the cigar in his mouth ruminatingly.

"*Beautiful* place!" he repeated aloud.

Scott sighed out his content. He had found, years before, that the spot where he now stood afforded the best possible vantage-ground from which to survey his estate. His back was against the mossy stone wall forming the boundary to this portion of the place. A few feet away, a queer, crooked stairway climbed the wall and ambled down the other side into the adjoining grounds.

An uninterrupted stretch of green grass swept upward, with many undulations, right from Scott's feet to his grey-stone house; it seemed to lap about the distant foundation like an incredibly vivid lake.

The mansion itself was irregular and mellow, only one story high in the billiard-room wing, four stories in the middle. It was covered with ivy that every breeze played upon in silent music. The house appeared to be fast-rooted, a product of the soil on which it stood; it might have been drawing in nourishment from the ground while at the same time it visibly sagged to decay in certain, deliberately neglected spots. The edifice showed a blurred bloom of surface, a bloom that Scott's careful tending allowed nowhere to be rubbed off. There was about it all the inevitable droop of age.

The house occupied the centre of the circular lawn. A broad path marked the extremity of the smooth-clipped sward. On the other side of this walk, the greatest of Scott's treasures reared themselves—his trees. They formed a gigantic, primeval belt of green, flecked with the mahogany of copper beeches. They looked world-old, yet they still were in their sturdy prime. Below the impenetrable cloud of leaves sprawled

the trunks and the grotesque roots, heaving themselves out of the earth in dragon-like convolutions. A sacred grove, it might have been, with prehistoric monsters on guard everywhere.

Scott stood at the foot of one of the most splendid trees. He put out a hand and stroked the wrinkled bark; it was tough and apparently loose as the hide of an elephant. The man peered into the massed verdure and nodded his head with pride to see the great rusty chain far up that pinioned and safeguarded the limbs. The dog, sniffing about, growled defiance and suspicion at the somnolent giant.

The hum of a motor interrupted Scott's silent rhapsodies. He scowled.

"Who in the world—?" he wondered and hurried away to intercept the intruders.

He headed them off in the driveway. They proved to be two women in an open car.

"My dear Theodore!" exclaimed one of the women. "It's delightful to see you again. I just heard this moment that you'd opened your house, so I rushed over. No, I won't get out!"

This was not in answer to any pressing invitation of Scott's; indeed, he had as yet had no opportunity to put in a word.

"We are simply desperate, Geraldine and I; the servants are leaving us in droves. Our house is so filthy, you know, they refuse to tackle it. I have taken a solemn vow to-day *never* to rent a place of mine again. All tenants are alike, Theodore; I haven't a doubt that even *you*, if you were a tenant, would lose your self-respect and throw lemon-peels and cigar butts into the Chinese vases. Please don't look at us; we are simply unclean—perfect pigs, Theodore. You must come to see us to-morrow; you will probably find me on my marrow-bones scrubbing the butler's pantry. There now, you're looking at me; don't deny it, you *are*. I begged you not to. Have I a daub of soot on the end of my nose?"

Scott, during this recital, had leaned against the door of the motor and, ever and again, had murmured urbanities. "Have you only just arrived?" "I'm so sorry the Posts left your house in such a dreadful state." "Are you going to be with us all summer?" "You look extremely fit," etc., etc.—a smooth stream of polite commentaries.

The woman had paid not the slightest attention to his remarks. Catching the peculiar, hollow intonation of her voice, its utter lack of reverberation, Scott suddenly remembered that she was deaf. She never heard a word anyone uttered; it was therefore her policy to substitute monologue for conversation. The result was really triumphant. In her presence people soon learned to keep still and to enjoy in silence the never-ending flow.

Mrs. Gibson, like all entertainers of the extemporaneous sort, knew that the boisterous vein, not without a dash of downright buffoonery, would best hold an audience. Discarding all attempts at truthfulness, she made up stories (usually farcical and about herself for the most part) as she went along.

Endowed with an irrepressible fund of humour and an untiring vigour, she never wearied her auditors. This was in itself a remarkable achievement, for her voice was a monotone and she strung her words along as if to the beat of a metronome. In a woman of less exuberant invention, such an utterance would have soon become unbearable.

"Yes, this is Geraldine," said Mrs. Gibson, noticing that Scott's glance had strayed to the girl at her side. "She's pretty now, isn't she? Nobody knows the tortures the mother of a growing daughter suffers. Of course, as a baby she was hideous—I had no hope whatever then. She was as cross-eyed as two sticks, with no nose whatever, so far as I could see. All of a sudden, when she was six, she developed into the most beautiful creature imaginable—you remember? Her curls were sheer gold and I have never seen such dimples in a pair of human legs either before or since. I was in the seventh heaven. But I shall *never* forget the

day when I first noticed she was getting skinny, with great bones flapping about, instead of arms and legs. 'My God,' I told her, 'you're not a child, you're a hobgoblin.' She got worse and worse until she was fifteen. That was my principal reason for running off to Europe as I did and hiding my head for four years. I couldn't face my friends' pity. And here she is, Theodore, a perfect picture, as she was at six—though she hasn't any dimples in her knees now, to be sure. I don't feel really safe yet; I'm hoping to see her married before she turns into a fright again."

Whereupon Mrs. Gibson, with a quiet smile, patted the girl's arm indulgently.

"We are very fond of each other, Theodore," she continued, "but we quarrel in the most fearful and noisy way. Perhaps you recall the frays we used to have; we are worse if anything nowadays."

She shook her head and assumed a melancholy air. Mrs Gibson never laughed; her smile was always slow and rather sad, vanishing from her face by imperceptible degrees, much in the manner of the Cheshire Cat's grin. Her anecdotes gained effect from the expression of tragic, almost lugubrious disillusion she habitually wore.

"By the way," she remarked, "I want to talk to you about that ridiculous stone wall between our lawns, Theodore. It gives my whole place a down-at-the-heel look. Won't you allow me to put up something really expensive and distinguished?"

"My dear Vivian," shouted Scott, "I love that stone wall. Nothing shall induce me to part with it."

Mrs. Gibson was a clever judge of expression, even though she was unable to read lips. She got Scott's protest in a moment.

"Don't scowl at me, please, as if you wanted to chew the roses off my hat," she exclaimed. "I see you feel just the same about the dowdy wall as you used to. You would refuse to speak to me on the street if I changed it, wouldn't you? Did you *ever* behold such a savage, Geraldine?"

Geraldine, who had been leaning back in the motor and examining Scott with cool discernment while Mrs. Gibson held the centre of the stage, suddenly sat up straight and shut her parasol with a decisive click.

"We want to see your gardens," she told Scott. "Mother has probably forgotten why she came; she'll stay here and gossip for hours unless we stir her up."

She got to her feet and sprang out of the automobile.

"Ah, I am wasting time!" cried Mrs. Gibson. "I'm going to send the motor away, Theodore. I must go over your greenhouses with you and ask your advice. Geraldine and I can get home by way of that absurd stile or whatever it is. Kling!"—and she addressed the footman on the box—"You're to get all those pots and pans I told you about—at the five-and-ten-cent shop if possible. You'll need money, I suppose."

She fumbled about in a mesh bag.

"I have nothing less than a hundred-dollar bill; give it to them"—and she thrust it at him—"and tell them I'll work it out."

Scott started forward in dismay; but Geraldine put a hand on his arm and stopped him.

"Please don't bother," she said calmly. "Kling understands. That is just Mother's way. He has change enough, I'm sure."

Mrs. Gibson, after many more exhortations to the footman on the subject of kitchen-ware, turned to Scott.

"I know you're planning to show us some of your ancient and venerable trees," she remarked, "but we are in a hurry. Please take us straight to the nectarine house and the vegetable garden. Geraldine and I are practical souls. We don't care about Nature, when it's not edible. We've come to ask you whether or not we should discharge Hawkins—our head-gardener; he's let everything run to seed, I'm afraid. You know Hawkins? He has

a glass eye and a game leg, but charming manners."

Mrs. Gibson made a point of giving the people she talked about dreadful disfigurements. These afflictions often proved fictional; but they served the lady's purpose—they added colour and zest to her anecdotes.

"You are so neat and unruffled, Theodore," opined Mrs. Gibson, as they started off for the gardens. "Geraldine and I should both be in the bathtub at this moment, scrubbing our dirty faces."

Scott only smiled, for the two women were magnificently gowned. The mother's frock was of cream-coloured chiffon, with great blue hydrangeas strewn about it; strange silken roses drooped over the brim of her hat. A rope of wonderful pearls added the last extravagant touch to the costume.

Mrs. Gibson's figure was amazing: above the waist she was opulent, with a bosom of Junoesque proportions; but her hips were corseted beyond belief, giving her from the waist down an effect of excessive and suffering slenderness. Walking was a gingerly and a hazardous undertaking with her; she leaned her weight on Scott's arm and took steps like those of a mechanical doll; the joints were so pinioned by the cruel harness she wore that they failed to function.

Mrs. Gibson's dress was short; her ankles and feet were as slim and pretty as a girl's. Her head was superb in shape and crowned with beautiful black hair. The face was arrogant, hard and handsome. Decidedly, Scott reflected, she was admirable, imposing. He sought to visualize her with an ear-trumpet affixed to her Olympian bosom and failed. He even tried to picture her on her knees in the butler's pantry—again he failed; it was obvious a woman so imprisoned would be unable to swerve an inch from her erect poise.

Geraldine was very different from her mother and yet startlingly like her. She was dressed in white, with a pink sunshade; pink morning-glories formed a delicate cluster around the brim of her big hat. Tall, lithe and free from the pressure of corsets, she looked like a fleet huntress, but with a statuesque quality about her. She, too, was a goddess, of the true Olympian carriage. It was hard to believe that a creature of such calm self-possession was only nineteen.

Geraldine was unequivocally beautiful. Her head was small and of perfect proportions; its shape was impeccable, its set on her long neck suavely easy and aristocratic. The girl's colouring was pure ivory and gold—a skin of cool pallor with an aureole of pale yellow hair. Her features resembled her mother's; they were smaller but possessed the same insolent hauteur. Geraldine, for all her free grace and simple costume, looked quite as specialized and expensive as Mrs. Gibson.

"Are you bathing yet?" Geraldine asked Scott in a low, clear voice while they strolled about the nectarine house. "It's not too early in the season, is it? Come with me to-morrow, won't you, please?"

"I shall be delighted," returned Scott.

"Thank you so much." Geraldine smiled at him. "Mother will be furious. She will want me as a referee between her and the servants. I'll tell her I have errands on Thames Street; then she'll have to let me go. With Mother, there are always pots and pans to be bought, you know."

"Geraldine, stop talking to Theodore," commanded Mrs. Gibson. "You two have been whispering together for a long time and paying no attention to me. That is Geraldine's way, Theodore. She gets tired of hearing me talk, so she tries to distract my friends' attention from me. It is rude of her; it is rude of *you*, too, Theodore. I haven't a doubt you're hatching a dreadful plot between you."

Geraldine laughed merrily.

"Mother and I know each other so well," she remarked.

"I am dog-tired," complained Mrs. Gibson. "Geraldine, dear, we must be going. I haven't talked about Hawkins, have I? That was my only ex-

cuse for coming, too. Geraldine, why didn't you *make* me talk about Hawkins? Do let's get out into the air: it is stifling here."

Mrs. Gibson led the way for a few paces; then she paused and grasped Scott's arm once more.

"No, we can't stop for tea," she said. "Lead me to that stile, Theodore, and boost me over it. I haven't the strength or the courage to climb the rickety steps."

Despite her protestations of fatigue, Mrs. Gibson talked her way energetically clear across Scott's grounds.

On top of the stone wall at last, she smiled down sadly.

"It has been delightful," she said. "Run over and see us to-morrow. I shall send Geraldine away and we can talk about old times, the dear, indecent old times, Theodore."

Still talking, she disappeared by slow degrees into her own grounds, the smile gradually vanishing as she went. Geraldine, at her mother's side, waved a hand in Scott's direction and called out:

"To-morrow at noon. Don't forget."

Scott, left alone, shrugged and shook a disapproving head.

"But they *are* rather glorious," he qualified it.

CHAPTER II

"GERALDINE is undiluted Prescott," Scott decided that night, after he had let his thoughts dwell on the girl for a good half hour.

An undiluted Prescott was always an arresting and alarming figure, warranted to provide excitement.

The exploits of the family had begun in Virginia during the seventeenth century. Townsend Prescott had set the pace in Jamestown and his descendants had never allowed the breakneck speed to slacken. Throughout the Colonial period of American history, the Prescotts had been staunch supporters of England and bitter enemies of all who considered themselves downtrodden by the Hanoverians. The Revolution had been unable to shake their allegiance; after Yorktown they had sailed in a body for the beloved fatherland.

Fifty years later, the sole survivor of the family had settled in New York; he had amassed an immense fortune and joined another to it by marriage. The only child of this union, a son, had been a scandalous and lovable scapegoat, quite in the fashion of his ancestors. The people whom the Prescotts married never seemed to communicate any curbing influence to their offspring; a Prescott could be counted on to be a Prescott and nothing else. Mrs. Gibson and her brother had been true to type; and now Geraldine Gibson, the last of the line, had in her veins the disturbing blood of her race.

A Prescott was inevitably vigorous, haughty and eccentric. Many of them had been polished wits; a number of them had been undisputed leaders of fashion; but somehow there had never been a Prescott who could be called civilized.

Legend clustered about the name; there were enough Prescott anecdotes extant even in the eighteenth century to fill a fat volume.

For example, Frederick Prescott of pre-Revolutionary days had run off with a pretty matron when he was just turned twenty. A week later he killed her husband in a duel; the next morning her brother despatched him.

Then there was Geoffrey Prescott—the most celebrated toastmaster of his generation; he had eclipsed all rivals with tongue, sword and stomach for wine. Annabel Prescott, his sister, had taken a high fence once too often and had left behind her a Virginia clad in sackcloth and ashes and bewailing her trampled beauty.

Tony Prescott, Mrs. Gibson's father, had been notorious, too; most of the tales current about him were not for the drawing-room. The intimacy of the club was alone the proper setting for the telling of them; men dared to whisper some of the least hilarious into their wives' ears—and even these were so many signals for blushes. Tony had

done one admirable thing; finding his fortune in a sad state, he had rushed across country to California in '49 and had delved out of the earth a treasure beyond the dreams of romance. The rest of his life he had spent losing and winning vast sums in rapid-fire succession. On his death, he had bequeathed to his son and daughter some forty millions. Tony, Jr., had proceeded to drink himself into the next world. It took him just three years to accomplish this. Then Mrs. Gibson had found herself the sole possessor of her father's gold.

Mrs. Gibson was not of the lethargic sort. She always spent her money and her days in prodigal fashion. New York and Newport had the maddest seasons in their history during the ten years of her married life. Thomas Gibson, a slender and retiring man, had loved his brilliant wife in a quiet way; by way of return, Vivian had adored Thomas to the point of insanity, had literally killed him with her ardour and the round of gaiety by which she celebrated her union with him. The marriage feast had lasted for a decade and Gibson had at last succumbed. Vivian had been prostrated on his death; but her vigour returned in a rush at the end of a year. Rumour had it that she had not been unfailingly estimable during her widowhood. Certain men were cited as equivocal comforters; it was said that the lady often drank more than was good for her, more, indeed, than many a seasoned drunkard could stand.

These stories were by no means trustworthy. Still, how otherwise *could* one account for her abrupt departure from America, for her protracted sojourn abroad?

Thus the scandal-mongers confronted Mrs. Gibson's staunch admirers. It was true that she had left the States, her entire retinue in tow, when her daughter was fifteen, that she had taken a queer, isolated place somewhere in the Tyrol and had shut herself away with the child and her governess. People argued a cure of some sort or at least a period of insanity. The four years had not been all of seclusion, to be sure. There had been sporadic descents upon Paris, abrupt onslaughts on the Riviera, and a season or two at Spa. Society was still wondering just what the trouble might be, when she returned to New York of a sudden one June morning, and, a week later, had arrived at Newport.

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Gibson's growing deafness had been the occasion for this virtual retirement from the world; her vanity and overweening pride had been injured by the affliction and she had rushed off, afraid lest the failing should become known, mortified at the prospect of people's pity. Among the Tyrolese peaks she had fought out her problem and determined on a campaign. She had appeared in Paris and the resorts at last and tried out the clever scheme of monologue on those of her friends who happened to be on the scene. Encouraged by the brilliant success of the manœuvre and comforted by the superb beauty of her daughter, she had returned now in triumph to her native land.

When Mrs. Gibson took possession of her house, the Newport season had not begun; but people were already foreseeing the feverish round of July and August. Scott had called up in the silent hours a vision of the queenly Geraldine, had dubbed her "undiluted Prescott" and wondered just what sort of mischief she would be up to.

At that very moment, many others, immersed to the ears in preparations for the summer, were also indulging in uneasy conjecture.

In ten years' time, just how much fatter would that volume of Prescott anecdotes be?

CHAPTER III

TRUE to appointment, Scott entered the pavilion of Bailey's Beach at twelve o'clock sharp; Geraldine Gibson was already there. She was once more in white, with sweet-peas of a salmon shade at her waist and around her hat-brim. She sat on the piazza rail and

faced the sea, her arms stiff at her sides, the hands, palm-upward, supporting her.

"Good-morning," she called out gaily. "We shall have the ocean to ourselves. Isn't that nice?"

Turning her back to the water, she swung her feet over the balustrade in a flash and gave him a long, white hand.

"I've been sitting here for fifteen minutes," she told him. "My head is full of plans—deep-sea exploits."

"Have I a place in them?" asked Scott. "I'm a very cautious man, Geraldine; if I'm to be your escort on these marine expeditions, I'm afraid my death will be a watery one."

"But you mustn't disappoint me," protested Geraldine. "Mother wouldn't hear of my doing these things alone. She trusts *you;* she would feel I was safe with you."

"Your mother's kind; as a matter of fact, I should be no protection at all. I'm really a plain, workaday swimmer." Scott was modest.

"I'll tell you my plan," vouchsafed Geraldine. "I want to see if I can go from Bailey's to Easton's."

Scott did his best to discourage her.

"My dear girl, it's at least three miles."

"Yes, I know," said Geraldine. "That shouldn't frighten us, though; Uncle Tony once swam to Narragansett."

"You must remember," complained Scott, "that your Uncle Tony had been a football star in his day. You can't emulate him with any hope of success. Your Uncle Tony was a heavy-weight champion, too. Do you want to copy him in that also?"

Geraldine laughed.

"No, I don't intend to take up prize-fighting, I confess. Swimming, you see, is perfectly ladylike and doesn't spoil a girl's figure."

"True," admitted Scott. "We'll talk about this picnic later. You're not planning to do it to-day, I hope?"

"Oh, no!" Geraldine shook her head earnestly. "You haven't heard all my plan yet."

Scott groaned out an impolite remonstrance.

"Good heavens, what more *could* there be?"

"We shan't do it in the daytime," Geraldine elucidated. "We are going to choose a moonlight night, Theodore."

Scott pursed his lips into a silent whistle.

"How very romantic!" he said. "Leander, with Hero by his side! Your idea is too cozy to be Greek. Will you serve sandwiches and a bottle of beer en route?"

"You misunderstand," replied Geraldine. "I want a moonlight night, because that's the time when the water is the proper temperature. I'm not sentimental in the least."

"I stick to the romantic side of the picture," persisted Scott. "Can't you *see* the phosphorus playing over my bare legs? I'm sure you can."

"How conceited." Geraldine wrinkled her forehead delicately. "Do you call your bare legs romantic?"

"With the aid of the moon, I'm positive they could be made so." Scott was unabashed.

"I think it's high time we went into the water." Geraldine got to her feet, cutting short the man's fanciful flight.

In his bathing-suit, Scott walked up and down for a good quarter of an hour before he was rewarded by a sight of her. As she walked down the flight of steps, he told himself that she was the sort for whom a man would waste half a lifetime of waiting. She might have been a Burne-Jones sorceress, with her still eyes on the watch for gallies. There was an architectural quality about her; the blue sky behind her sank into a mere background, a wash of colour against which she loomed, straight, slender, of unearthly stature. Her white arms, her neck, seemed incredibly long and fluent. Scott felt dwarfed of a sudden; it was as if an ivory-and-gold goddess of heroic proportions had left her twilight shrine and was advancing towards him down the steps of her temple.

She reached his side at last; to his amazement, Scott found himself smiling into the eyes of a young girl, no taller than he, and dressed in a conventional and very smart bathing-suit.

She thrust out a silken-clad leg for inspection.

"Aren't they much more romantic this way?" she asked.

He shrugged.

"They will serve, I admit," he responded.

Geraldine paused for a moment and tucked a last curl away under her cap.

Then, erect and vigorous, she strode off towards the ocean.

She stood the first shock of the water in Spartan fashion, with only a quick hunch of the shoulders.

"It is very cold," she confessed—"ice that has forgotten to freeze."

A half dozen long lopes and she was under, before the man had even so much as got his toes covered.

"My God!" he sputtered. "My breath has gone—never—to return."

But she was already forging ahead, cleaving the water with her beautiful arms. He followed meekly in her wake. Far out they swam, silent and exultant; then, at a signal from the girl, they turned and raced for shore.

On the beach again, she swept off her head-covering and shook out her hair. Scott drew in his breath quickly from sheer admiration; but Geraldine was matter-of-fact.

"I'm afraid I've got it wet," she said, her fingers playing in and out of the glorious mane.

She was dazzling at that moment, with the sun on her. Her hair was no longer a pale aureole; it was a yellow flame licking at the white face and arms. There were metallic glints in it, points of fire, liquid, running lights.

"You're a true fire divinity now," remarked Scott. "Loke turned woman!"

Geraldine made no reply; she continued to handle deftly the molten mass, to toss strands about, to run her hands through the tumbled mesh on the search for snarls. Then, in a flash, she had flung it all back over her shoulders and forgotten it.

"Your teeth are chattering in your head," she informed Scott. "Don't wait for me, please; I shall be a long time dressing. Till to-morrow at twelve then!"

She gave him a distant smile and left him.

CHAPTER IV

For generations the Scotts and the Prescotts had occupied adjoining places during the summer. The two families had always been on the best of terms; but, strangely enough, no Scott had ever married a Prescott. There had been from the first a gulf between, a gulf over which nobody had ever attempted to throw a bridge.

The two estates were typical. The Scott mansion and lawn and trees had remained unaltered for over a century—as the Scott jewels had been left in their original quaint settings.

The Prescotts, on the other hand, were for ever pulling things down, rooting things up, embellishing extravagantly, disfiguring shamelessly. The irresponsible, irreverent, restless crew were unable to keep their hands from rending one moment and rearing the next. Each of them had all the old jewels refurbished and, dissatisfied with the result, proceeded to buy other stones, unhallowed by tradition, remarkable only for size and magnificence.

It was the same with their houses. A Prescott, on the death of his parents, called every architect in vogue at the time to his side, quarrelled with each in turn, threw money about and in general kept the surrounding temperature at fever-heat; the edifice of dreams, when completed, was inevitably a failure, from the owner's viewpoint. Additions, deletions would be in order at once. The Prescott grounds at Newport had been graced in turn by wooden Colonial houses, chateaux after the French manner, palaces in the best tradition of the Italian renaissance, marble

villas that had no tradition whatever back of them. Peace was unknown to the spot; there were ever sounds of hammers, curses of foremen, the creak of derricks, the loud complaints of Prescotts.

Mrs. Gibson, being a true Prescott, had torn down her father's rococo house and supplanted it with a Gothic pile. She deemed the result ludicrous; every time her motor crossed the drawbridge over the moat, purred its way the length of the drive, cut through the immense grey tower and came to rest in the interior court, she cursed herself for a vulgar, meddling fool.

People laughed at the Prescotts, of course. The Prescotts knew they did and took the ridicule in all calmness; did not they laugh at themselves? When all was said and done, however, it was granted on every side that the eccentric family was admirable. More—they were superhuman. They were the last of the Titans; sanity and discretion were not to be expected of them. The Scott's opinion was no exception to the rule. They, too, considered the Prescotts superb; but as for marriage with them—as well choose almighty Zeus or stentorian Hera for a fireside companion!

Theodore Scott saw a great deal of Mrs. Gibson and Geraldine before the season got under way. He continued to take daily swims in the girl's wake; he dined often with the two women; he entertained them at his own house. Ever and again, there would come over him a startled sense of his insignificance beside them; particularly at his own dinner table it would strike him. His mind would go harking back to mythological tales, even while he chatted on the most casual topics. In his imagination he would fancy the descent of the ladies from golden houses on Olympus; he pictured exotic chariots drawn by peacocks or leopards waiting under the porte-cochère. Mrs. Gibson, in the midst of a tirade against Hawkins' cucumbers, would, without warning, become remote and Homeric. At times, as he gazed at the exquisite Geraldine, he half-expected to see a quiver of silver arrows slung from her shoulder.

Scott would often laugh to himself at his absurdity; and yet the hierarchical visions persisted. He sought to thresh the thing out. Certainly it couldn't be that their clothes exalted them. The costumes they wore were excessively modern. The mother was always clamped and rivetted into the very latest creation from Paquin or Callot Sœurs; her hair was cast according to the vogue of the moment. Geraldine's gowns were a far cry from the fluttering draperies with which one swathes divinities; her yellow locks, piled high, had evidently been prepared with as much care as the cakes in a confectioner's window.

Still, the two women preserved the majesty of goddesses. The explanation lay in their picturesque proportions and in the set of their heads, Scott at last decided. Nothing could alter that superb, insolent bearing; witness the mother's corsets! A woman who, with such a handicap, could retain her elemental grandeur, was indeed colossal.

The appetites of the Gibsons perhaps contributed to their general sublimity, for they well-nigh ate Scott out of house and home. They were catholic in their tastes; nothing was too exotic or too homely for them. Fresh vegetables of the most everyday description would be despatched with relish and speed; outlandish delicacies tricked out with rich sauces fared no better. The two ladies just sat at Scott's side and ate everything in sight, that was all there was to it. Their Little Marys must be made of some empyreal and immortal substance, the man reflected.

"By the way, Theodore," remarked Geraldine one evening, at the moment when her mother's attention was distracted by the lobster before her, "tomorrow the moon is full. I have made all the necessary arrangements for our swim."

Scott looked scared.

"Splendid!" he vouchsafed, without

great conviction. "What *are* the arrangements, Geraldine?"

"We start at eight-thirty. A boat will follow us—"

All at once Scott felt himself a prey to anxiety—not for himself but for Geraldine.

Letting his eyes rest on her, he had forgotten her Olympian character; he saw only that she was very slender, immensely precious. Her eyes, usually so deep and clear, were full of young adventure. For the first time she seemed an eager girl and nothing more. He hated to think of her out on the perilous waste, buffeted by the black, treacherous water.

Then in a flash his fear melted into thin air; Geraldine had straightened, as if in answer to a challenge, and had thrown her head back.

Scott, succumbing anew to her spell, voiced his admiration.

"Neptune wouldn't dare to be anything but hospitable to *you*," he said earnestly.

Geraldine frowned.

"I wish you wouldn't be so silly, Theodore," she returned. "You'll spoil the fun if you take the thing seriously. *I* think it will be a lark."

Scott's attitude was constantly giving her cause for complaint. Throughout the past weeks Geraldine had sought to make of the man a companion in her jolly pranks; but, handicapped by physical majesty, she had been unable to keep him from dropping ever and again into a sort of silent genuflexion. He could see that she was bored, almost hurt, when he intoned her praises; but he found it impossible not to acclaim her to the accompaniment of a swinging censer, as it were.

He couldn't, for the life of him, consider their equality seriously; he was her choir, making a clumsy and abashed moan upon the midnight hours. Geraldine didn't like it, showed she resented all the fuss he made; but it did no good.

"Mother doesn't know anything about our swim, of course," said Geraldine, still with a look of impatience. "You mustn't tell her. Promise you won't!"

The night of the moonlight exploit, Scott, not without a feeling of desecration, adopted an offhand air with Geraldine. She showed her gratitude by bounding and loping gracefully at his side while they awaited the launching of the boat that was to trail them. Her laugh was bright, with a note of childish glee in it.

"Aren't we fools?" she asked him. "At least, I'm a fool. You're not to blame at all, Theodore. I hope Mother will believe me when I tell her it wasn't your fault."

It was low tide. In the east the moon hung, a hard, bright circle like a flat coin against the midnight-blue heavens. The sand was wet and icy cold near the water's edge, its surface gleaming with pools of trickling light, serpentine rivulets of chilly flame. The ocean was as black and polished as lacquer.

Out into the path of the moon the boat swung; Geraldine and Scott, immersed to the knees, shivered and laughed into each other's eyes. All about them flashed and danced the phosphorus, metallic yellow plates on the glossy water.

Geraldine, with a quick gasp of breath, plunged forward and disappeared under the fin of a wave covered with golden scales. When she reared up once more, hoary flakes fell from her arms. She struck out into the darkness, white frosty fire licking at her as she forged ahead. Scott made after her with a shout.

"We mustn't talk!" she called out; "but do look at the moon, Theodore."

"Glorious!" he returned

"Do you think so?" Geraldine laughed. "It reminds me of a thin, lemon-flavoured wafer; it makes me hungry."

They forced their way silently after that through the liquid night, the comforting plash of oars nearby. On and on they swam, with slow, powerful strokes. Far away on their left was

the shadowy mass of the cliffs, dotted here and there with the glitter of an illuminated house.

"I'm so homesick," admitted Geraldine once. "Did you know there *could* be such loneliness and immensity?"

Scott panted out an inarticulate reply.

"It makes me ache," pursued the girl. "I almost wish we'd brought a brass band along. I wonder if it's silent and terrible like this in tombs"

The serenity of the night was oppressive. The wan moon and the still, aloof planets seemed worlds distant.

"Two miles done!" called a deep voice from the boat. "More than half the distance covered."

It was meant to be encouraging; but Scott, grasping the words in a dazed way, groaned. His heart was knocking hard at his ribs, positively clanging in the manner of a bell-clapper. There was an unbearable pain under his heart; his throat was stinging. He swallowed mouthful after mouthful of salt water and felt his legs grow leaden. His head swam; in a moment he would faint, he knew.

Geraldine, still sweeping ahead with a rhythmic beat, had caught the sound of the man's laboured breathing and had been mutely studying out the situation.

Of a sudden, spurred on by a succession of quick, rattling gasps from him, she did a very human, a very charitable and ungodlike thing.

She made for the boat, grasped for the gunwale.

"Please—take me in," she faltered. "I—I can't go any farther."

In a second she was over the side.

"Theodore," she pleaded then and smiled down into the anguished face bobbing about half above and half under the water, "won't you join me? I never have felt so gloomy."

No sooner said than complied with! Scott, the next moment, was sprawling in the bottom of the boat.

"Forgive me," apologized Geraldine. "I couldn't stand it any longer. The whole world was beginning to feel like one huge icicle, with you and myself frozen into the middle of it."

Scott gazed at her in speechless gratitude; he was sure the men around him were smothering guffaws behind their hands, but he didn't care at all.

Geraldine stood, straight and tall, near the bow. She was wrapped in a long cloak. The effect was compelling. The fluttering draperies might have been great furled wings that reached from her shoulders to her feet. She was motionless, yet somehow, as they sped back along the lunar highway, she seemed both the guide and the motive power.

"Goddess excellently bright," commented Scott under his breath. Aloud, he remarked, "Are you fagged, Geraldine?"

She nodded and sighed.

"Bed is still so far away," she said, "and there's Mother to face to-morrow morning."

She dropped down beside him, held up a flask and a handful of crackers.

"I'm hungry and unhappy," she confessed and began to eat.

Silently they partook of the meagre repast. Scott peered at her sleepy eyes, at her beautiful lips flecked with crumbs. After all, she was only a tired, helpless child. A wave of protecting tenderness swept him. He threw an arm about her, bent and kissed her mouth.

Startled, she rose and strode away from him. Scott trembled at the thought of his temerity. He had been guilty of sacrilege; he had held a vengeful deity to his breast!

Geraldine suddenly turned and faced him.

"Don't be so silly, Theodore," she scolded.

The man was too conscience-stricken to perceive that her voice was unsteady.

They said no more. When the boat was beached at last, Geraldine sprang out, murmured "Good-night" and ran to the motor that waited for her.

Scott lingered for a while, without knowing why he did so, and moped. Soon he realized that he was shaking under his heavy coat.

Then, sad beyond belief, he hung his head and walked away from the brilliant scene.

CHAPTER V

He awoke the next morning in a jubilant frame of mind. He still ached in every muscle; but that did not bother him in the least. He lay in bed and smiled blandly. His thoughts were all of Geraldine. He felt her firm, cold lips under his; he could almost taste the salt on them, so vivid was the remembrance.

He was man of the world enough not to consider the embrace binding; it had been romantic but not in the nature of a betrothal kiss. He knew the Prescotts, he told himself; the women of that family were not the sort to be chary in any way. Geraldine had been beguiled of her record swim—and through no fault of her own; still, he did not feel repentant. He was contemplating her now as he always contemplated the girls he had kissed; today she seemed by no means remote or unattainable.

Noon found him in Mrs. Gibson's grounds; he was making a leisurely way to the house when the sound of raised voices caused him to halt.

Trapped in the beech-walk, he was forced to stay where he was and, willy-nilly, to be a witness of a dramatic clash of arms between mother and daughter.

The two women faced each other at some distance from him: they stood confronted, heads thrown back, eyes levelled; they bristled with wrath. Mrs. Gibson was in a morning wrap of purple. The diamonds on her fingers and at her breast gave out white flames; her pretty feet were planted solidly, the heels dug into the turf, as if she expected blows on her capacious chest. The silk gown she wore was blown back, so that it clung to her in front and floated free in the rear, like the garments of the Louvre Nike.

Scott caught the outline of the inevitable harness; the contours of her legs were everywhere visible; the legs themselves were apart and bore a ludicrous resemblance to a draughtsman's compass. Mrs. Gibson's voice was raised to a shout and she brandished an imaginary javelin.

Geraldine was in an attitude of defence and watched her mother with a wary eye. She was in white as usual, a dash of tawny colour at her girdle.

All at once Mrs. Gibson advanced a step, shot out an arm and gave the girl a resounding slap in the face.

"Oh, my God!" cried Scott, thunderstruck.

Geraldine stood transfixed, one hand to her cheek.

Mrs. Gibson's jaw dropped; she was obviously dismayed at what she had done.

Then an incredible thing happened. The women rushed for each other. In a moment Geraldine was clasped to her mother's breast and the two were sobbing ecstatically. Mrs. Gibson patted the girl's head, crooned over her, soothed her with vigorous protestations of love and anguish. The denouement was ludicrous, comic even, and yet superb; it was pathos on a vast scale.

The fit of weeping over, mother and daughter moved off towards the house. Their arms were linked; they mopped their eyes and smiled.

After they had disappeared, Scott took out his handkerchief and dabbed at his forehead.

"What a marvellous, impossible pair!" he muttered.

And he had just been counting on a conventional flirtation with one of them!

CHAPTER VI

July came and with it the season. People had prophesied pyrotechnics; it proved a rather disappointing period. Mrs. Gibson entertained extravagantly, of course. So did everybody else, for that matter.

Geraldine, however, failed to live up to expectations. Her beauty provoked

admiration; but she was so calm, so dignified and unaffected that she made one uneasy. Nobody knew how to take her. The young people had been prepared to troop about at her heels and to rush headlong, under her guidance, from one wild scrape to another; the older set, likewise, had foreseen an orgiastic summer.

Geraldine fooled the whole crowd. She was less vivacious than other girls; instead of chattering gaily from morning till night, she dealt out words with discrimination. She did not keep a topic going for any length of time; she would move straight to the point, in the most businesslike way imaginable, voice a dry or a caustic comment and dismiss the subject.

It was disconcerting; it took the wind out of people's sails. Geraldine in conversation resembled a shrewd bargain-day customer; she faced one over the counter, fingered for a moment the wares one was ready to discuss and laud by the hour, and then with a polite smile passed on.

The girl's very presence in a house seemed somehow a tacit insult. She dwarfed one's most exquisite ball-room decorations; she reduced one's daughters to puppets.

The trouble was, everybody realized vaguely, that Geraldine did not belong in a gathering of ordinary, flesh and blood mortals. It was impossible to make her fit into the human picture; she should have been reared up on a pedestal and placed at a distance, where her sublimity could have been appreciated, her aloof smile marvelled at, and where she wouldn't have interfered with anybody.

Geraldine amazed and bewildered people; they couldn't have told with any clearness just what their feelings were in regard to her. They had soon decided at any rate that they did *not* like her. In a month's time they had stigmatized the unfortunate girl as "unpopular."

Theodore Scott could understand the general protest; he, too, was a victim of Geraldine's grandeur; yet, strangely enough, he glimpsed ever and again her yearning for sympathy. After all, she was only nineteen; she *wanted* people to like her.

"Poor child," he would say to himself, "it's a shame!"

Her life, he reflected, had been barren, unprofitable. She had been overshadowed from the beginning by her incredible mother; she had always been cut off from every-day human comradeship, shut up somewhere away from the world. No wonder she did not know how to act! The poor girl was shy, timid to a degree; of that he was sure.

He watched her with intensity throughout the summer. It was immensely pitiful to behold her, quiet and commanding, on the fringe of things.

The young people soon made a point of holding her off at arm's length. At the beach she would stride up to a group of gossiping débutantes, sit with them and strive to be one of them; the circle would close in, gradually but inexorably, and Geraldine would in the end find herself outside. It was the same at the Casino. Geraldine thrashed all the girls at tennis, did it rudely, too, it was said; soon she found difficulty in getting anybody to oppose her over the net. Even the men, urged on by their women, aligned themselves against her. Had it not been for a persistent allegiance to Mrs. Gibson, the ostracism would have been complete.

Geraldine was a Prescott — and, needless to say, proud. She gave people a fair chance; finding an unconquerable hostility on every side, she squared her shoulders, turned her back and went her lonely, unhappy way. It was not in her to conciliate others at the expense of her own self-respect. She had soon become in truth the insolent person of Newport's imaginings.

Of all the young crowd, Charles Ridgeway alone achieved intimacy with Geraldine. But such an intimacy! The girl treated him like a dog; in return Ridgeway teased her blithely, took without wincing the insults she gave him and in general acted as if she were an ugly colt he was breaking in.

The chap was frankly a reprobate; for him no woman merited respect. He knew he was handsome, positively flaunted his good looks. Geraldine's hauteur tickled his sense of the ludicrous. He would face her anger in easy insolence and burst into roars of laughter when she tried to hurt him.

"That's right, Gerry," he would cry, "hit hard—below the belt if you want to. I don't care a damn."

Mrs. Gibson had anticipated a triumphant season; the effect upon her of Geraldine's failure may well be imagined. She soon lost all control over her temper; she rushed about constantly in a mad rage. She fumed, she fretted. The servants mutinied at least twice a week. Bedlam reigned. She fought with her daughter, abused her friends roundly. Nobody dared even attempt to bring her to reason. The absurdity, the needlessness of the fiasco kept her at the boiling-point.

Mrs. Gibson appreciated her daughter's worth. She knew the girl was the most exquisite creature that she or anyone else had beheld for years. Every day she would summon Geraldine and examine her with cold discernment. At times she wished there was a flaw somewhere, a weak point in the armour of beauty, something to put one's hand on and remedy. The first Prescott who had ever failed! The thought was unbearable.

The fault was entirely Geraldine's, of course; Mrs. Gibson took that for granted. What could be the girl's object? If only she would make an effort, people would be grovelling at her feet in no time. This catastrophe must be the result of hitherto unperceived nastiness in her disposition. She was venting spite, the mother decided, paying off old scores by refusing to qualify socially; no other possible explanation presented itself.

It never occurred to Mrs. Gibson that Geraldine was an unformed, immature girl, leagues behind her own body in worldly grace. Shy? Diffident? Mrs. Gibson would have dismissed the words as preposterous. She had forgotten that Geraldine had lived nineteen years in seclusion; she saw only that the girl was beautiful, that she *should* be confronting the world and wresting admiration from it, and that as a matter of fact she was exhibiting herself in a fit of silly sulks. Mrs. Gibson therefore resorted to rattan-like treatment and made life unbearable for herself, her daughter, the servants, everybody in short who happened to come within earshot.

Mrs. Gibson's entertainments were famous for their brilliancy, had been famous for twenty years.

This summer she was lavish even beyond her wont. She gave weekly dances that were superb in external trappings. The entire first floor of her house was converted every Friday night into a veritable bower of roses; the floral effects were magnificent. The grounds, too, were tricked out to perfection. Fountains plashed, a myriad of fairy lights twinkled, orchestras strummed; but the affairs fell short every time. Mrs. Gibson glittered and glared; Geraldine moved from room to room in slow majesty. The air was heavy with forebodings; the effect of all the splendour was ominous, oppressive.

Nobody knew just what the matter was; it was obvious, though, that people did not enjoy themselves. Gaiety flagged early—that is, the gaiety of everyone but young Ridgeway. The rich display seemed somehow vulgar and garish.

It had ever been Mrs. Gibson's art in the past to make her guests forget their expensive setting; it had been her gift to impart something of the jollity that Christmas trees and birthday parties had contributed in childhood days. Now the spirit of devil-may-care fun was absent.

Mrs. Gibson took to dealing out insults right and left. She was courting disaster, she knew; this, however, did not deter her.

She resorted at last to tableaux vivants for charity. On the ninth of August, she crowded the entire sum-

mer colony into her ballroom—at the point of the bayonet, as it were.

The night was hot; people sweltered and complained. The entertainment was excessively long-drawn-out. Mrs. Gibson had reserved Geraldine's picture for the last thing on the programme. She posed as Burne-Jones' Circe—this on Theodore Scott's suggestion. The tableau was astoundingly beautiful. Geraldine seemed of immense stature.

"If she stood up straight, her head would bump against the ceiling," whispered a woman in the front row.

She was tawny, tigerish, lithe and terrible. Her white arms were positively amazing, they were so long, of such serpentine power. People should have burst into acclamations; instead, the applause was a mere patter. Chairs had begun to scrape and fans to flutter before the curtains had closed. The thing was too eccentric and unconventional to be appreciated. The feline attitude was voted ludicrous.

"She looked too much like a baseball pitcher," commented somebody.

"Just what *was* the idea?" Charley Ridgeway was at a loss. "Had Circe been eating green apples?"

Mrs. Gibson found it difficult to forgive Scott for his interference. She scolded him vigorously the next time she saw him; but, for her, the dressing-down was gentle.

In her heart she cherished gratitude towards the man; for, throughout that unfortunate summer, he had been Geraldine's champion, a true pattern of medieval chivalry. He had kept at the girl's side from the beginning; not once had he faltered. With him alone Geraldine was at ease. He had been her father's friend; he had given her pretty gifts from the time she was a baby. He had even—a very rock of patience—taught her to ride a bicycle when she was ten years old. The moonlight swim had shown her the bond still held; it had also prepared the way for a new and conceivably disturbing relation.

Subsequent events had not fulfilled expectations in that line. Scott had made no further tender advances. He had become more and more respectful as time went on; he often frankly prostrated himself at the girl's feet. This never failed to annoy Geraldine; she would give him a scornful look and try her best to make him see what a fool he was. She would even in high dudgeon send him away and beckon Ridgeway to her side.

Scott, who early had begun to get glimpses into his companion's mind, to understand what a simple child she was, strove valiantly to strike a note half-fatherly and half-fraternal; his success was but an indifferent one.

There were moments when he felt he was head over heels in love with her; he would watch her mouth, recall with remarkable vividness the firm feel of it under his own lips. He would hesitate on the brink of a declaration; then, without warning, the old Scott conservatism would fasten upon him. He could hear the axes chopping down his trees, see the army of workmen billetted upon him directly the honeymoon was over.

With a sigh not all of relief he would step back from the dizzy verge. The vision of Geraldine the goddess would take the place of Geraldine the girl, yielding to his embrace. If it wasn't a question of stentorian Hera at his fireside, he would at least be dealing in future with a fickle, destructive Aphrodite. Better the votary's awe every time than the lover's ardour, he decided.

In a flash, the danger overcome, he would find himself pitying the girl, yearning to draw her curly head down on his shoulder and to comfort her. Decidedly, it was a unique thing, Scott's attitude towards Geraldine Gibson.

Mrs. Gibson accosted Scott one morning at the Casino.

"Give me a moment, Theodore," she commanded with a tragic smile. "I must talk to you about my horrible Geraldine. What shall I do with her? She is ruining me; people will soon be-

gin to treat me like the commonest sort of climber. It's already got to the point where the graceful thing for me would be to decamp, clear out, run away. Of course, I can't bring myself to do that without first putting up a fight. Can't you reason with the child, Theodore? She ignores *me*. I feel somehow that you are the only living person in her good graces. Argue with her, Theodore; bully her, I beg of you. She's beautiful; she's sweet—at least she *can* be sweet when she wants to. I haven't a doubt she's sweet to you and to Charley Ridgeway. This is my plan, Theodore. I am having my yacht put into commission. I shall entertain some people on it next week. Can't you plead with Geraldine, insist on her behaving nicely? It may not be too late to erase the first dreadful impression she's made. You will help me, Theodore? As an old friend I ask it. Geraldine will do whatever you ask her to. She dotes on you, my dear man."

Mrs. Gibson placed a hand on Scott's arm.

"Simply *dotes* on you," she repeated. "The poor child is not happy; if only *you* could be the one to bring her to her senses."

With this broadside she left him.

The lady was not subtle.

Scott saw at once what she was driving at.

Her social prestige was being jeopardized; what more natural, after all, than the match-making policy? With Geraldine off her hands—well off her hands, too—she would be able once more to soar to a position of unchallenged supremacy.

Scott's shrug and slow head-shake were not the most encouraging portents in the world.

Geraldine's mother had blundered; she had aroused the century-old antagonism between the two families.

CHAPTER VII

One afternoon, as Scott lingeringly went the rounds of his estate, the sound of a footstep nearby brought him a pause. He turned; Geraldine was perched on the old stone-wall.

At the first glance, she seemed as calm and cool as usual; hand on hip, she surveyed him.

Scott smilingly helped her down; then he noticed a flush on her cheeks, a peculiar dilation of the eyes. The faint violet tint beneath her lids made that portion of her face appear sunken. Her gown of salmon-pink chiffon was exquisitely soft and fresh, her hair dressed with skill; yet somehow it struck Scott that the girl stood before him in disarray.

She was wretched and weary; her costume failed to conceal the droop of fatigue. Geraldine had been spending the day in a darkened room; she had cried her eyes out. Scott had needed but a moment's scrutiny to convince him of that.

Geraldine pointed out a bench under an immemorial elm.

"Let's sit down—there," she suggested.

"I am a fool, of course," she announced, after he had dropped down beside her. "It's very silly to fret about being a failure, isn't it?"

"It's very silly for *you* to fret about anything, Geraldine," he returned.

"This summer has been ghastly," she pursued. "Every morning when I get up I have the memory of the night before to discourage me. That is bad enough, heaven knows; but I've also got on my mind the terrible fear of the night that's coming."

"But you *mustn't* let what's coming scare you," Scott protested. "These dances and dinners are so frivolous and unimportant. If you'd only realize what foolish things they are, you'd soon get over your stage-fright."

"Perhaps I should," said Geraldine; "but mother won't allow me a moment's peace, Theodore. She doesn't give me time to think the thing out. She scolds and shouts and boxes my ears from morning till night. I think mother feels that everything will come out beautifully if she can succeed in

making a nervous wreck of me before the end of August."

Scott laughed and indulgently patted one of the girl's long hands.

"It isn't a joke, I assure you," complained Geraldine. "I have reached the end of my resources. To-morrow night there's going to be a dinner on the yacht, you know. Mother and I will have a row to-night, I'm sure, and several to-morrow. Mother's capacity for brawls is unlimited."

Suddenly she leaned closer to Scott.

"Mine *isn't*, Theodore," she told him. "*Mine isn't*," she repeated with a world of conviction in her tone.

Scott looked deep into her eyes; the light of anger burned in them. It would not be long before the standard of revolt flapped in the breeze, he reflected.

He pitied Geraldine with all his heart; but at the same time he felt a vague terror as he watched the flickering, disturbing fires under the white lids.

He turned his head away.

"It's much safer, Geraldine, never to lose control over oneself," he advised gravely. "We're very apt to find that things were far better *before* we lit out and dug with our claws."

"You talk as if I had some cold-blooded plan, as if I had a knife up my sleeve," commented Geraldine with impatience. "I haven't, Theodore. I don't want to do horrid things; I'm afraid, desperately afraid—that is the point. I don't blame mother," she explained. "I know how disappointed she is, how her pride is hurt. She feels, you see, that I'm spoiling the whole show on purpose. Since she can't hear, she can't be expected to understand. But—" again the note of earnestness, as of facing the facts squarely—"there are limits to what one can endure, Theodore."

With that, she got to her feet abruptly.

"I'm sure I don't know why I have told you this," she said. "I have horrified you, haven't I?"

She gave him a calm glance.

"Please don't worry. I probably shan't murder mother, after all."

Again their eyes met. Geraldine's were stilled now, serenely blue. She smiled apologetically and held out her hand.

"Forgive me," she pleaded. "I couldn't help getting all this tommyrot off my mind. Don't bother to see me over the stile, Theodore. I can find my way."

She turned and sauntered off.

When he was alone, Scott sank down on the bench and with wrinkled brows contemplated the ground at his feet.

He was puzzled. He could not for the life of him make out just what the girl had been after. There had been a strange, baffling gleam somewhere in the quiet depths of her eyes as they had rested at the last in his; it haunted him and made him feel a burden of discouragement, an inexplicable sense of failure. It was as if she had tested him, found him wanting and had conveyed a rebuke in all gentleness. Damn it all, he fumed, what under the sun had she expected from him? He could not tell; but, none the less, he cursed himself for a coward.

Scott's fit of sadness persisted through the evening. He dined out, perceived he was boring the women on either side of him and decided against going on with the other guests to the big dance he had planned to attend. The Gibsons had failed to show up at the dinner; their absence caused him uneasy conjectures.

Ten o'clock found him in his library; he ferreted out "L'Ile des Pingouins." The brilliant shafts of satire seemed to drop short of the mark. He sighed and put the volume aside.

His eyes wandered to one of the French windows open on the terrace.

All at once he straightened, with a stifled exclamation.

Geraldine Gibson stood before him, framed by the lighted square, erect and beautiful against the night.

The effect was startling, as if she

had suddenly taken form, thrown off a cloak of invisibility. She was in a gown of pearly satin, cut very low; there were big pearls around her neck. Her face was white, fixed in an expression of pale fury.

She took one step and was in the room with him.

"I warned you, Theodore," she said, as she faced him. "We've had a final row—a smash-up."

She swayed, then drew herself up.

"We had it out," she persisted. "We're through with each other now—no doubt whatever of that."

"My dear girl," protested Scott, "you're unstrung; you don't know what you're saying."

Geraldine tossed her head with weary impatience.

"But I *do* know," she told him. "I'm not going back; that's the long and short of it."

"That is absurd." Scott was stern.

"You have no place to take shelter in. An unprotected girl can't set herself adrift like this, Geraldine. For heaven's sake, be sensible. If your mother has been cruel she will be sorry enough for it in the morning."

"I saw the light in your library," Geraldine pursued, paying no attention to his words. "I came—to ask your advice."

"I've just given it," returned Scott. "Go back now to bed. You will be ashamed of yourself to-morrow."

They were silent for a long moment. Geraldine trembled a little and bit her lips. Scott, confronting her, showed a rigid disapproval of this child's-play. The girl, too, was firm, her thrown-back head implacable as Electra's; there was something baleful, almost matricidal about it.

A shiver raced up Scott's spine. Then, of a sudden remembering how young she was, he shrugged deprecatingly; the situation merited nothing better than ridicule, he decided. What right had she to annoy him with her silly tantrums, force herself upon him at this unearthly hour?

They continued to watch each other with an unwavering gaze. Scott forgot everything but his determination not to blink.

Geraldine broke the painful pause.

"If there had been any relief in sight, I might have stood it for a while longer," she said; "but there seemed no chance of that."

Her voice broke.

"If there was hope *now* of things changing, I"—she hesitated, waiting for him to catch it up; he said nothing—"I might be able to go on," she wound up feebly.

Into the girl's eyes there had stolen a mute appeal, a pitiful dumb yearning. The man, confused by the crisis, did not see it. At that instant she was just a tragic child, tortured by the injustice of her lot, frightened and dazed by what she had done.

"There isn't a bit of hope; things wouldn't change." Her words were those of resignation. She was no longer bold, a creature of fine anger. She was timid, helpless, not daring to follow out the hint she had dropped.

"Go back?" she articulated at last "I can't—I won't do that."

"You are behaving like a baby." Scott remained inflexible. "Don't you know, Geraldine, that one always goes back after a family quarrel? Of course you know it; *you* are going straight back."

He paused and examined her with intensity. "You are coming to your senses at this very moment. You are beginning to see how things are. Isn't that so?"

With firm fingers he grasped her wrists and shook her lightly.

With a lightning-like motion she snatched her hands away. The touch had aroused her to the point of decision.

"You tell me to go back?" she asked. "You think I have no right to assert my independence? You think I should smother my pride?"

"I tell you to go back," was all Scott said.

"Very well." Geraldine recoiled; the man, seeing in her a sign of yielding, had stepped forward impulsively.

"I will go back, Theodore," she let him know. "Don't come with me, if you please."

She turned from him and swept out of the room.

Scott took up his position at the French window.

The girl walked slowly the length of the terrace, now merely a glimmer of lustrous white, now a distinct, radiant figure as she passed a lighted window. Without a single glance backwards she descended the steps; there came to Scott the sound of crunching gravel. He watched her striding over the lawn. Then the gigantic trees engulfed her.

A half hour later, Scott shook himself savagely and, stepping out on the terrace, began to pace up and down.

The realization that he loved Geraldine had come to him at last. As she had faced him in the library, she had aroused in him all the old admiration, with its admixture of unreasoning terror and downright disapproval. She had been the creature to marvel at and to keep clear of. Now! He muttered imprecations on his own head. During the brief scene she had been there for him to gather to his breast; she had begged in her strange way for pity, for comfort and protection. And he had thrust her aside!

Rushing to him like a young savage, she had determined on a wild, a violent rumpus; thwarted by her own fears, she had failed, had seen the meeting degenerate into a mere prosaic scolding. It had been his fault more than hers—the feeble wind-up. Well, to-morrow he would make amends; but—a doubt that rankled—might he not already have sacrificed her love? Might he not? Might he not?

The question drummed ceaselessly in his brain, like the beat of a pulse. He called up before his mind's eye the vision of Geraldine, wide-eyed and tearless at her bedroom window, her lips shaping silent reproaches; he saw her tossing feverishly on her bed.

At the very moment he was visualizing her so melodramatically, Geraldine sat on the stairs leading over the old-fashioned stone wall and, her tousled head in her arms, sobbed out her miserable heart. If Scott had only known that, he would not have postponed his plea for forgiveness until morning.

CHAPTER VIII

THE next afternoon, Scott learned that Geraldine had eloped—and with Charles Ridgeway. The news struck him at first as preposterous, ridiculous. He was not stunned; he took the announcement coolly. The grim irony of it impressed him—that was all. He had lunched on a friend's yacht and lingered for an hour or two. There was really no occasion for reckless haste, he had decided that morning; better give Geraldine time to view things in proper perspective. After Mrs. Gibson's dinner in the evening, he would speak.

It was already time to dress when he reached home. His valet was the one to babble out the tidings with Gallic fluency and zest. The rumour had not yet been confirmed, according to Leclercq; but—reports of elopements always *were* confirmed finally; *and*, Madame had cancelled the little affair on the *Perrywinkle*. Was not that in itself corroboration sufficient?

Scott informed Leclercq that he would not change right off. He left the house and walked aimlessly about the grounds. It had rained all day; the storm had cleared now, but the clouds still hung heavy. The air was damp and mists blurred everything dismally. Little pools dotted the path; toads hopped about in stupid panic.

Scott was forced to pick a gingerly way. External discomfort and the instinctive fear of squashing some of the queer monsters that pranced away from under his feet preoccupied him; it was difficult to get down to clear thinking.

He paused at last on the edge of a large puddle; the water could not have been more than three inches deep, but it seemed unfathomable. Mirrored in it was a great elm: the reflection was

purged of all haze; each leaf was clear-cut. Scott prepared to leap over the muddy pool; he hesitated, realized that he had reached the tree underneath which he and Geraldine had sat on the previous afternoon. A shower of cold drops fell from the leaves, spattering him and dimpling the water at his feet. He stayed just where he was, motionless and melancholy; thought fastened on him that moment.

Scott glared around him and cursed audibly. His house, his trees struck him as so many objects to be loathed. Had it not been in their behalf that he had sacrificed Geraldine? Decay and musty damps enveloped him; the vivid, gold and ivory girl had gone out of his life for good and all. Wasn't he just one of that unsavoury band of hermits who, centuries before, had burrowed into the dirt, had hidden their filthy heads in it rather than succumb to the spell of beauty?

He groaned aloud at the thought of his amazing blunder; he splashed water about in a purblind rage.

Now that he had lost Geraldine, he forgot everything but her human qualities. The Prescott grandeur, the Prescott destructiveness had vanished from his mind. He perceived only that Geraldine, with her passionate mouth, with all her physical loveliness, had been in his grasp and would never be there again. Her youth and immaturity and tenderness usurped his attention. What a wife for a man! *What* a wife!

He strode away and carried his savage despair with him. The absurd rashness of her conduct goaded him; he saw with relentless clearness why she had brought ruin tumbling down about her own ears, her mother's, his—even Ridgeway's. She had given way to childish wrath, had felt the whole world aligned against her; while she was still hot in her anger she had determined to hurt others even though she wounded herself at the same time. This marriage to Ridgeway! Could Geraldine be so blind as to expect peace and quiet, a cessation of the old brawling?

Scott halted. He had heard his own voice shouting, "Folly! Damned, God-forsaken folly!"

This brought him an abashed pause. He looked sheepishly over his shoulder. The next moment he found himself examining his hands; he couldn't tell why he was in the irrelevant act. He frowned upon them; they were not unusual at all, he reflected solemnly—slender, strong enough, not too sinewy; they bespoke the gentleman and beyond that were not distinctive.

Then, as he traced the knotted veins, he saw in a flash why they had drawn his attention. They were not the hands of a young man; that was the point. He remembered now that another ten years would see him across the threshold of middle-age; he would be forty on his next birthday.

Scott straightened wearily. He had broken with his youth; that was what his loss of Geraldine came down to. Yesterday he had been at the cross-roads; marriage would have arrested the inevitable decline, acted upon him like an elixir. To-day he felt himself abandoned; surrounded by rust and mould, with no bright presence at his side to exert a rejuvenating spell, he would in no time sink into the fatal lethargy that ushers in bodily decay.

He sighed and swore a number of big oaths in the saddest, most desultory way imaginable. Overcome by a weight of discernment, he even went so far as to bend above the next pool he came to, with a view to dispassionate contemplation of his face. Not so bad, after all, he decided; one still wouldn't take him for a day over thirty.

When he went on his way again, he felt a little better; but soon he relapsed once more into bitter protest. It had occurred to him that at present it didn't matter *how* old he appeared; there was absolutely nothing to be gained in future, even should he retain his good looks for forty years. He had forfeited his one supreme opportunity; it wouldn't be a hardship to anyone in the world if he should wake up to-morrow a doddering idiot.

Scott found he could not bear to continue this wrestling with himself under the forbidding sky; he turned short around and hurried towards the house. As he did so, a sound of muffled pounding reached his ears. Mrs. Gibson was evidently not losing a moment; workmen were hard at it shutting up the Gothic pile.

Scott fled precipitately; every stroke of the distant hammers seemed to be driving a new nail into his coffin.

CHAPTER IX

Scott soon came to his senses. He went on living as he had always lived; nobody noticed a change of any sort in him. Geraldine's image became less vivid; at the end of a twelvemonth he was able to fool himself into believing that he had been downright fortunate to escape from her toils. His solitude irked, to be sure; a burden of loneliness lay heavy upon him a good part of the time.

Still, he argued with a faint show of conviction, he had always been dissatisfied in exactly this way. Ten—oh, fifteen years ago—people had made a point of expostulating with him, insisting that a man of his sort needed a wife. Had he not every time agreed with them in his inmost soul? Had he not from the first been a prey to misgivings in regard to the blessedness of bachelorhood? Of course, of course! Geraldine was by no means responsible for his occasional fits of unhappiness. Married men are often obsessed with the vision of the glorious freedom they have sacrificed; single men likewise find themselves pining, ever and again, for marital joys and responsibilities. Nobody is content with things as they are—that is the long and short of it.

So Scott insisted savagely to himself. When he felt shaky on his rhetorical pins, he called up with haste all the examples he could of Prescott unreliability and perversity. What could a man want with such a crowd, he would ask the vacant air. Above all, what common meeting-ground could a *Scott* have with one of that barbaric line? Though it had cost him a pang, he, Theodore Scott, had been true to the traditions of his family. He silently praised his conduct for hours at a stretch. He protested too much—he was aware of that, in a vague way.

Tidings of Geraldine he sought with an illogical persistency; he got them, too. The Charlie Ridgeways did not keep the world guessing as to their whereabouts and activities; they apparently were not over-anxious to circumvent the newspapers.

After the rash marriage, they hastened to Europe and remained there. American society they eschewed. Not so the nomadic, unscrupulous crowd that wanders over the Continent! Charlie, Geraldine at his elbow, once came within an inch of breaking the bank at Monte Carlo, the yellow journals reported. A Russian Grand Duke, true to his type, pursued the couple in every direction—how successful he was remained a moot question. Geraldine's insolent beauty, her gowns, her jewels evoked printed ecstasies in at least seven languages. If one took stock in what the French said, one believed that Longchamps resolved itself into a mere setting for the "ravissante Mme. Ridgeway." The universal adulation aroused Newport's suspicions; there must be a press-agent in the background, it was decided. People, recalling their distrust of Geraldine Gibson, congratulated themselves on their good judgment; it was obvious that she had not been at home in decent surroundings. Scott chimed in with the general condemnation.

One thing, however, made him horribly uneasy. Someone, returning from Europe, had remarked,

"There's not a word of truth in all this fuss—that is, so far as Geraldine's concerned. Charlie's in it up to the ears, of course; but not *she!* She's living very quietly—somewhere away from the hurly-burly. I *know*, because I've seen her."

It was disconcerting; it aroused in Scott the old feeling of guilt and

treachery. Still—and he dismissed the intriguing thought with venom—people always *did* know, always *had* seen, when as a matter of fact they didn't and hadn't. (That was the way he phrased it to himself.) Well, he didn't believe a word of it. Somewhere away from the hurly-burly indeed!

Mrs. Gibson, during the winter after Geraldine's marriage, made things go very well, socially speaking, in New York. The disastrous summer at Newport was forgotten. With success, generosity and the maternal throb of affection returned. Mrs. Gibson sailed in April for Europe; there was a spectacular reconciliation between mother and daughter in Paris.

For almost three years, people had Geraldine's triumphs crammed down their angry throats. Scott in particular felt that his digestion suffered; at times his gorge rose. He continued, however, on the search for news. Like everyone else, he was waiting for the first hint of the brewing storm; he could not have told, to save his neck, what his feelings would be when the crisis came.

It was all over before anybody knew it even threatened. Geraldine obtained a decree of absolute divorce in Paris. People felt horribly cheated. Scott was stunned, too dazed to think at all for the time being. When his mind cleared, he found that one idea overshadowed every other; Geraldine, at present the woman of poise and experience, would most certainly not waste a moment on *him*.

Scott had schooled himself, those three years, into something like equanimity. Geraldine thousands of miles away was not very terrifying. The moment she got her divorce, however, the report spread that she would soon return to the States.

Immediately Scott became tortured by doubts and fears. She loomed before his mind's eye—cold, cruel, the avenging goddess. He had but lately been afraid she would ignore him; now, with a hunted, driven feeling, he longed to be passed over without a sign of recognition. He knew himself for a feeble, helpless creature; he could see himself scurrying off, like a toad, from beneath her conquering tread. Never before had he so intensely craved neglect.

In April, Geraldine and her mother sailed for New York. Scott, in his Newport seclusion, trembled. During the first week in May, the sound of hammering assailed his ears. He rushed for the vantage-point of the old stone wall. Half a dozen bustling workmen were visible on the Gibson estate. The blow was about to fall then; Mrs. Gibson was having her house unboarded. In another week she and Geraldine would be on the scene.

CHAPTER X

THE meeting was commonplace enough, on the surface. Geraldine, the day after her arrival, scaled the stone wall; Scott, who had been indulging in a surreptitious peek at the Gibson grounds, stood discovered at her feet and murmured a surprised greeting. He managed to hit a careless, informal note, though his heart hopped in his breast.

"My dear Geraldine!" he exclaimed. "I am so glad to see you."

"Thank you, Theodore," she returned and held out both her hands.

He grasped them eagerly and, while he still shook them, drew her down beside him on the old steps.

"Your place is just the same," she remarked casually. "Ours isn't, of course. Mother has had the house redecorated and the gardens fixed up a bit. Things aren't completed yet; the plumbers won't be through their job for a week."

"How well you look!" Scott commented.

"And you, too," Geraldine answered. "You and Mother never grow a day older."

Scott smiled and patted her hands; if the girl had expected to see him wince, she was disappointed.

"Your mother is as well as ever?" he queried.

"Oh, yes!" Geraldine nodded. "We get on quite well now; we're not thrown together so much, you see."

"Splendid!" Scott voiced his enthusiasm. "You go your way and your mother goes hers—is that it?"

Again Geraldine nodded. "I'm not the blunderbuss I used to be."

"I should think not!" cried Scott.

"I can look out for myself at present," she pursued. "I don't disgrace Mother any more by my clumsiness. I have interests of my own; I'm perfectly content and happy. It's the same with Mother."

"I understand," Scott was sympathetic. "You live under the same roof, but your paths don't cross."

"Our paths don't cross," echoed Geraldine. "I know to-day that the sensible thing is to keep one's path away from other people's."

"Ah, Geraldine!" Scott became personal. "You are warning me off, I'm afraid."

"Not at all, Theodore," she protested coolly. "I'm just telling you for your comfort that I don't intend to get into your way again."

"You are doing no such thing!" Scott persisted. "You are saying 'Keep off' very delicately."

"But why should I do that?" she queried. "You never *have* bothered me. I'm sure you never *will*, either."

"Then we're to have no more jolly swims?" he complained.

"Oh, I hope we shall." She was quick. "Friends' paths don't get tangled up with each other. They run parallel, don't you know; they aren't in danger of intersecting."

"You have put me in my place, I must admit," said Scott. "I'm only the foolish chap that taught you to ride a bicycle. I'm an old fool—the sort one has to be nice to. Very well, Geraldine, I quite understand."

She did not attempt to contradict him.

"Tell me, Theodore," she demanded, "do you think I have changed at all?"

"The change is obvious, it seems to me," he told her. "As you say, you are perfectly able to look out for yourself. I don't wonder at it; I expected nothing less."

"I am as hard and unlovely as a porcelain bathtub—is that what you mean?" Geraldine laughed softly.

"By no means," Scott denied it. "You may be as cold, but you're much more beautiful."

"I must be going," Geraldine suddenly announced and got to her feet. "Come and see us *soon*, Theodore. Mother has a great deal to say to you. She's planning to have you dine with us almost every night."

Scott faced her.

"Why did you come here to-day, Geraldine?" he asked.

"What a silly question!" Geraldine puckered her forehead, as if at a loss.

"Come, be honest," the man pleaded.

"Well"—she deliberated—"I'm not perfectly certain, I'm afraid."

"Oh, but you are, don't deny it, my dear girl." Scott was incisive.

"Perhaps I wanted to show you how foolish you would be if—" She hesitated.

"If?" he urged.

"If you attempted to make love to me." She completed the sentence quietly, with calm deliberation. "That sounds crass, doesn't it?"

He was silent.

"The point is," she elucidated, "I wasn't subtle three years ago. I did my best then to make you fall in love with me. It occurred to me this morning that you might think I *still* was waiting—for you to act. I assure you I'm not, Theodore. You are safe now. I like you; I know you're admirable. But I'm not in love with you to-day."

"You put your case like a judge," he said. "Don't be alarmed in future, Geraldine. I shan't so much as broach the subject."

When she had gone, he sank down again wearily on the rickety steps.

"Damn the minx!" he muttered. "So she's decided to treat me like a grandfather."

Geraldine had assuredly not flattered him; she had sat at his side and dealt out covert insults in the blandest, coolest manner conceivable.

Scott was angry; he decided he rather disliked the girl. Make love to her? A thousand times no! Her beauty even was chilling now; he set it down as glacial.

"But glaciers melt," he reflected; and Geraldine's exterior was frozen for good and all. It was really a pity. He hated hard women.

In his heart of hearts, Scott knew he was wretched, terribly hurt by Geraldine's attitude. A suspicion grew, as he went over the conversation point by point; could she have meant what she said or had she merely determined to prove to him at all costs that her skin was whole? This doubt arrested his attention; he pondered over it.

In the end, he relapsed into inertia. Of course she had meant what she said, he informed himself. The scene they had just had was exactly what he had prophesied. Ridgeway and three years of Europe had been the forcing-house. Her beautiful immaturity and her elemental majesty had been sacrificed; she was at present only a brightly polished woman of the world.

"A porcelain bathtub," he said aloud, with no gleam of amusement in his eyes.

Scott felt of a sudden old and desperate. He went to bed early that night, furiously protesting that Geraldine meant nothing to him now; he was free of her for good—not a doubt of it, not a *doubt* of it. Wouldn't he go right to sleep, the moment his head touched the pillow? It wasn't till well after midnight that he was able to keep his lids down over his eyes. One o'clock struck dolefully; two o'clock! Scott swore with a wild insistence. By three he had dropped off at last.

He awoke with a start. Someone was pounding at his door; there was a strange, pinkish glow on the wall at which he was staring. What was the trouble, he wondered?

All at once, he saw Leclercq; the fellow had burst in on him, was jabbering away excitedly. What the devil!

"Madame Gibson! Madame Gibson!" screamed Leclercq; a blind shot up under his hand.

Scott sat up and peered through the window.

The whole sky was red; with a bewildered exclamation, he tossed the coverings aside and jumped to the floor. He stood still, his heart pumping, the blood surging in his veins.

Back of his trees, he had seen a great sheet of flame that towered into the dark sky, leaping up higher and higher as he watched. A mighty roar filled the room, deafened him, drowned Leclercq's hysterical enthusiasm. A livid light played over everything.

Scott swayed. He tried to take a step and his knees refused to support him; he felt sick, faint. A breeze danced about his legs; it was hot. A confused mutter reached him, then a persistent clanging and the diabolical shriek of sirens; engines were speeding through the night.

The clamour brought him to his senses. He stumbled about, shouted at Leclercq, scrambled into whatever garments the fellow offered. He shook all over, his teeth sounding like castanets. Before he was aware of leaving the room, he realized he was half across the lawn. Grotesque figures ran beside him, in front, to the rear; he must have ordered the servants to the rescue! The fact that he had left his own house unguarded did not worry him. He didn't care a damn for the rattle-trap, he reflected savagely; he cared about nothing in the wide world but Geraldine's safety.

The fiendish din grew; the fire shot to an immense height and seemed to lick at the stars. Sparks sailed high in air. He could hear engines panting and snorting. The sea of flame increased in volume and sound; it mounted, tore an inexorable way, rent the blackness; it hummed and boomed and crackled. Scott rushed over the stone-wall, barking both shins without knowing it.

The Gothic pile was magnificent, colossal. The trees that ordinarily kept it from view at this point were now only a delicate and transparent screen. The mansion dominated everything. The huge square tower was silhouetted against the flickering, pale-orange background; the battlements stood out distinct and black. Every window in the house was a solid flame.

Scott rushed on. An angry hissing reached his ears; at the same moment he perceived the graceful arcs of water picking a dainty way over the stone surface, crossing each other as they did so; they might have been so many rainbows robbed of their iridescence or the jets of an immense fountain.

Scott paused, gasping for breath. Overwhelmed by the ghastly horror of the scene, he did not for the instant dare to go farther. What if escape had been cut off? He shut his eyes; clammy drops started out on his forehead.

A crash and a wild shout aroused him. The roof had collapsed. The thunder of its fall shook the ground; the hollow reverberations died away dully. A rain of sparks was fanned by the momentary rush of air to a stupendous height. The points of fire floated serenely above the tumult.

It was the strength of utter despair that impelled Scott now. He dashed ahead and groaned out his misery. His love for Geraldine mastered him, choked him. If she was safe, he would crush all opposition; he would have her in his arms again, let her struggle against it as much as she pleased. He would make her *his* alone. Events had forced the issue.

The grounds were thronged by people in all stages of undress. Laughter rang out; the spirit of holiday adventure animated everyone. Even in his anguished daze, Scott noted the general jollity and was reassured. Ignoring the curses of policemen, he ducked under the ropes and made across the lawn to the house.

All at once he heard a cry coming from the throats of the crowd at his back, then a universal intake of breath. The sound was revolting—the sentimental murmur of a mob that is being treated to something deliciously horrible. Scott swore silently at the brutes.

Then, right before his eyes, he beheld two men with a sheeted something in their arms. The long, terrible figure appeared majestic even as it was laid on the ground to suffer the desecration of the rabble's sorrow.

"Geraldine!" Scott whispered. He sagged and fell forward on his face.

He awoke to the sound of Mrs. Gibson's voice.

"If Mr. Scott feels moved to faint on my lawn, he has my permission. It is not the business of the police department. You may keep the townspeople back of the ropes; you may hit them over the head if you wish to. You mustn't interfere with me, however, nor with Mr. Scott. My daughter and I will see to him."

Mrs. Gibson was engaged in an altercation with a burly minion of the law; she had taken it for granted that he was being uncivil about poor Scott's collapse.

"Mrs. Gibson has misunderstood you." Geraldine's voice! *Geraldine's voice!* "She doesn't realize that you are trying to keep her out of danger. Please don't feel hurt."

Scott's eyes were open now. The two women, dishevelled and majestically solicitous, were bending over him. The man gave them a twisted smile of apology.

"Devilish sorry," he faltered.

"Not at all, Theodore," Geraldine protested.

She rushed away, followed by her mother. In the midst of the glare and intense, scorching heat, they took up a commanding position. Geraldine could be heard giving orders in a high, clear voice; Mrs. Gibson, not to be outdone, shouted commands that for the most part contradicted her daughter's. Servants scurried about among piles of furniture. Confusion reigned. A column of water leaped from the firemen's

control, gutting what had been saved from the drawing-room and drenching Mrs. Gibson. The lady screamed execrations.

Through the tumult Geraldine strode triumphant. Her hair had escaped from the few hastily adjusted pins and streamed down her back. The white morning-robe she wore showed jagged tears and dripped water. Nothing daunted, she swept from place to place regardless of peril. The servants were awestruck and obeyed her every word. Her voice had lost its tone of quiet reserve; into it there had crept a strident, trumpeting note—a delirious, raucous drunken chant her utterance seemed. Her coppery mane gave her the aspect of a Fury or a fierce Mænad. She appeared wild, exultant. So must the Olympians have looked while Troy thundered into ruin beneath them.

Scott, dazed by this new aspect of the classic Geraldine, got feebly to his feet and struck off the obsequious Leclercq; he wanted to follow the girl, into the teeth of the flames, if need were. He lurched, stumbled, and caught at the valet's extended arm.

"Who was that—under the sheet?" he queried suddenly.

"Madame's maid," came Leclercq's ready response. "She was trapped, overcome for the moment."

"Where is she now?" Scott sought to keep his voice steady.

"In the thick of it—with Mademoiselle Geraldine. She soon came to."

Scott groaned. He alone had failed, then!

Leclercq guided him to shelter and had a chair brought; Scott, feeling old and infirm, sank upon it.

In the distance, the figures of Geraldine, her mother and the menials darted to and fro. All at once, Scott perceived that they were rushing up to him, their arms laden. Two men deposited a huge Louis Quinze dresser at his feet. Mrs. Gibson was carrying an ornate clock. Geraldine piloted a chair. Objects accumulated about him. The pile grew until it impended dangerously over him, reached above his head, even shut out from him the conflagration.

Then at last he got the significance of it all. They were moving to a safe distance everything that had been rescued. And here was he, Theodore Scott, in the midst of the antique salvage! It was the ultimate, staggering blow.

Just at dawn, the feverish activity ceased. The turf in front of the house had been entirely cleared. Geraldine and her mother, realizing the inadequacy of handkerchiefs, mopped their dirty faces with the sleeves of their demolished robes; they stood side by side and surveyed the litter surrounding Scott. He could not bear to be included in the glance of appraisal; he got up and walked stiffly over to them.

"You are to be my guests indefinitely," he said. "I have sent my man over to make things ship-shape for you."

"Ah, thank you, Theodore," returned Geraldine. "That will be splendid."

She grasped her mother's arms and indicated the stairs over the wall.

"How sweet!" exclaimed Mrs. Gibson. "Then we shan't have to sleep under a tree or a haystack after all. It's delightful of you, Theodore. We are tired, of course; but I'm afraid *you* are much wearier. The excitement has kept us up—and the joy of seeing that abominable house consumed. I refused to have it made fireproof; I hoped for just this—long before the place was finished."

They faced about for a last glance at the stupendous pile. The frame stood intact, immense and unconquerable against the rose-and-gold clouds of early morning. The flames no longer soared; they were confined inside the building, eating a slow way over the walls. Charred beams, dusted with white ashes, protruded at crazy angles from the windows. A dense mass of smoke curled upwards from the ruin and, diffusing itself in the pure air, hung like a thin, ominous cloud over the wreckage.

"Ah, Geraldine!" cried Mrs. Gibson,

as if stung by remorse. "It is *beautiful!* At this moment it's what I've always tried to make it. How ghastly! Now I *know* I shan't be satisfied with the one I'm planning to replace it with." The incorrigible Prescott had spoken.

Stimulants and cozy warmth awaited them in Scott's library. Mrs. Gibson, catching her image in a mirror, fled incontinently.

"Have something sent up to me, Theodore," she demanded. "I'm too ungodly a sight to be looked at by man or beast."

Geraldine, alone with Scott, broke into a peal of excited laughter.

"Oh, Theodore, Theodore!" she cried and rocked with mirth. "This fire has pointed the way for me. It's been thrilling, glorious, gorgeous!"

Scott, preparing a drink with shaky hands, shot a frightened glance at her.

"I'm not insane; I'm just happy beyond belief," she told him. "I've learned to-night that I'm like Mother; I'm like all the wonderful Prescotts. Can't you *see* it in me? I've come out from under a cloud. I'm free!"

The ice rattled in the glass Scott held. He stared blankly at her.

"All these years I've thought I was in love with you, Theodore," she explained. "Ever since you taught me to ride a bicycle I've been obsessed with your importance—nobody could compare with you, I've felt. I've tried to act like you—made a mouse out of myself and failed from the beginning. You remember the Newport season? It was the same in Europe; I kept out of things and antagonized my husband—because of you. It made him furious to see me persisting in my seclusion; the only comfort he got out of our marriage was through the stories he made up for the newspapers."

Geraldine leaned closer and touched Scott's hand; she burst anew into merry laughter.

"*You* have been to blame, Theodore. I've fooled myself right along into thinking you were the man I wanted; and, when you treated me like a divinity, I would despair of ever bringing you to the point. Why did you strike me as so heroic, I wonder? The night of our swim, the night I ran away—you weren't impressive on either occasion. Still I kept my illusions. You failed again to-night and brought me to my senses. I've run after you outrageously—even when I married, it was to hurt *you*. I came back this spring with you in mind. I didn't mean what I said yesterday—about not making love and all that, you know. I have never been more obsessed by your importance than I was while we sat there together; I was trying out a new plan. Oh, Theodore, I have been blind! The fire has taught me that I am a Prescott and you are a Scott—worlds asunder we are. I'm vulgar, unregenerate, uncivilized; I felt like kissing the policemen and the firemen in my joy. I have come into my heritage at last. You have kept me from it till this moment. In future there will be no burrowing in the earth I promise you."

She sprang gaily to her feet.

"I spoiled my poor husband's life," she remarked. "You will be quite sure I'm mad, Theodore, when I tell you that I am going to explain the situation to him and beg him to take me back. We should have the jolliest possible life together."

Scott wearily shook his head.

"That, Geraldine, is a stroke of genius," he let her know.

"Thank you, Theodore," she said, and swept out of the room.

Scott's mind blurred; the next thing he knew, he was examining the hand that held his glass, scrutinizing it as he had done on the day of Geraldine's marriage.

"A Scott—but an old one; a Scott run damnably to seed. An idiot Scott!" he muttered and shut his eyes, wincing in anguish at his plight.

LES MISERABLES

By Edward Simons

"GIVE us a living wage!" clamoured the hungry crowd of strikers.

"A living wage! A living wage."

"I get three dollars a day, and I must have four to support my family," wailed one.

"I make four, but I can't live on less than six," lamented another.

"I earn six, but I must have eight," cried a third.

"Eight isn't enough; I want ten," shouted a fourth.

"I work ten hours a day, and I ought to work nine," came another voice.

"I'll work only eight," cried the man who worked nine.

"Six is enough," shouted the man who worked eight.

And again clamoured the hungry crowd.

"Robbers! Despots! Brutes! Give us a living wage, a living wage!"

SOUVENIR

By Muna Lee

YOU may forget the curve of my cheek,
And the turn of my head,
But there's one moon through the trees you'll never forget
Till the day you are dead.

You may forget the joy of our love,
And overlive its pain—
But there's one day in the mist you'll not overlive,
And one night in the rain.

DURING the first year of marriage the connubial conversation resembles the second act duet in "Tristan and Isolde." During the third year it resembles an exchange between two stock-tickers.

OPEN EYES

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

I

AT an incredibly tender age Eulalie was told—everything. Mrs. Blair Graze, her mother, had a modern conscience. She felt that she had been born and bred in darkness, and was grateful for the glimmers of light gleaned from certain highly polished novels on the enlightenment of the young, from warning sermons daringly intoned by her own rector—even from screen preacheries, calculated to move any mother of present-day susceptibilities. So Eulalie, during an intimate hour with her mother, had life's most sacred mysteries unrolled before her infantile mind. She listened obediently. Afterwards—quite innocently—she asked her governess to give her a bath.

Her governess, Miss Vermes, considered Eulalie's mother most wise. To augment the intimate, maternal hour, Miss Vermes, awhile later, saw that Eulalie accompanied her to an illuminating series of lectures on eugenics. Lectures were a fad with Miss Vermes. During her rather protracted sojourn in the Graze household, she indulged her appetite for advanced discourses on sanitary science, heredity, hymeneal logic and kindred topics—generally seeing to it that Eulalie benefited by her palpitant garnerings!

After Miss Vermes, came a fashionable finishing school, run by the Misses Wailes, exponents of that branch of philosophy which is concerned with human morality and conduct, and stern adherents to modern ethics.

The young ladies in the Wailes seminary resembled, in a certain degree, a basket of kittens blinking in an unmodified glare of light. Some of them—Eulalie was not among these—had the soft-footed tread of feline instincts too early aroused, the tongues of naive serpents and the eyes of baby junglecats. Eulalie's chum in the basket of kittens had made up her mind to enter a nunnery and avoid men for ever! Eulalie took the Wailes philosophy lightly. She was inclined to frisk and gambol, and was, on the whole, rather eager to live.

Eulalie was summarily removed from the chaperonage of the Misses Wailes in her eighteenth year, by the death of her mother. Mrs. Blair Graze passed out in the dark, dying one night, as her mother had died before her. Eulalie was now mistress of the Graze establishment on Long Island. Her father had a modern unconsciousness of her existence, being tied up with business exigencies, and beauties, of the city.

Naturally, Eulalie began to look about her. She did not care greatly for the acquaintances her mother had made—they seemed to her nice lichens clinging to trees of knowledge. She was looking for the buds and shoots from these trees! She was on the *qui vive* for conscious young cynics like herself, philosophers characterized by a gay contempt for human nature, cool materialists, adroit revellers in sentient pleasures, well-bred and highly glossed hoodlums who gave no evidence of any sort of conscience at all.

In her first freedom, Eulalie quickly ran the gamut of the heinous trifles forbidden by those who had controlled her childhood. Warned against kissing, she naturally cultivated osculation as one of the most interesting of the arts; she invited the manœuvred danger-

fraught seconds, learning to handle, taunt, and tempt the opposite sex.

Everything about Eulalie was either provocative or inquisitive. Her eyebrows stamped the small oval of her face with a question mark. Her mouth, with its twisted smile, young modelling, and always cleverly applied rouge, could be both sinful and simple. Her soot-coloured, oblong eyes, her disdainful nostrils, her pointed chin, the curves of her slight little body, each had their shadowy suggestion, their silken, inquisitive naughtiness. In the matter of dress, having been instructed in the vibration of colours and their effect on the senses, Eulalie seldom wore white. Having been initiated into the lore of perfumes and the emotions they roused or lulled, she sought out a modish laboratory, interviewed its perfume specialist, and had her personality expressed in a scent peculiarly effective—a flick of lilac and a flick of ylang-ylang.

The men Eulalie met soon bored her. They were, she felt, a basket of pups, happy-go-lucky, tumbling creatures with clumsy, harmless paws and yaps far worse than their bites.

By the end of her first season, Eulalie was an unhappy little wretch, sulky and satiated.

No one knew less than Eulalie why meeting Gregg Benton at a dinner party one evening precipitated her out of the sulks and piqued her interest. Though attractive, he was not an Adonis. Though eligible, he was not possessed of millions. Yet he instantly aroused her. The very timbre of his voice seemed to promise a new twist to the man-and-woman jig.

Throughout the courses of the meal, their eyes met more than once.

Benton sought her in the drawing-room, after dinner.

"There's a cereus in flower somewhere in the conservatories," he said to her. "Shall we hunt it up?"

She employed the usual monosyllable. "Yes."

Yet she rose with a swiftness of movement. In walking with him, she realized that his manner held just the right amount of zest, of humour, of anticipation—for the jig-saw of flirtation.

She was conscious of his likable height, of a profile cast in bronze tints, hair that might be nice to rumple and a chin whose incongruous dimple might fit her finger-tip. She was, also, cognizant of her own reflection in the mirrors they passed; a dazzling little figure in a sleeveless, one-piece frock of rose velvet with shoulder straps of iridescents that glimmered again about her hips and ankles.

He caught her glance, in one of the mirrors.

"I don't blame you for loving yourself," he laughed, aware of her vanity.

One of her shoulders lifted and fell.

She turned the drift of his words. "Do you believe in love?"

"Do you?" he smiled.

"Does anyone?"

"Of course not."

"Of course not! So let's fall in love with each other."

He laughed, and made a quick scrutiny of her. "All right. What's the first move?"

"To believe."

"In what?"

"Why—in love." She snapped her fingers, measuring him with a glance wherein lurked enticing mockery.

He caught her glance, giving her a bolder one, in return. "The first move seems easy enough," quizzingly. "What next?"

She was silent; moving through the greenery with her seasoned eyes of eighteen dropping. Neither the tinkle and drip of a fountain nor the sweep of fragrance from a nook particularly odorous lifted her lashes, it was as if she were contemplating the second move, extracting the honey from it and examining the poison.

Benton watched her. The clustering foliage cast lights and shadows on her face; now, etching its fresh tints and exquisite modelling, now, making a scarlet blotch of the mouth and two sooty lines of the lashes.

By chance, they approached the

night-blooming cereus they had come to see—a flower resembling a woman in a resplendent mood, milk-white as a woman preened for conquest, prodigal as a woman in some nocturnal hour.

"It's a beauty!" he ejaculated, halting.

"Isn't it?" she answered, beside him.

Her breath lengthened over a flower that blossomed infrequently and then at night—the sight, shaking her slight breast with a breath delicately desirous, lent her an air of passing sweetness, of transient languor. Suddenly, her lashes fluttered up and her face tilted to him; the eyes like slits of night against the luminous pallor of her skin.

Benton took the time to study her features at close range, before he kissed her.

II

EULALIE jigged into this new flirtation with every provocative, inquisitive instinct. She saw much of Gregg Benton. Outwardly, the flirtation in no way deviated from a normal course; beginning with the ordinary introduction, it described a cycle of matinées, teas, dances, chance and premeditated meetings, spans of indifferences and spells of exhilaration. The people of their set began to couple their names; gossip foretold the merging of the Graze and Benton fortunes, raked over the scandals of the relative families, and complacently awaited the natural dénouement of the affair.

Inwardly, Eulalie was merely bent on subjecting a young man who, no matter how heady the moment, seemed always able to hold her off for a brief, quixotic scrutiny; in the past, she had taken the prerogative of analysis and delay to herself. Eulalie was not primarily a husband-catcher. But she was a man-hunter, with a keen scent for the chase. It was amusing to find herself under eyes that sought to read her—and to work for the blind occasion where there might be no hesitation on his part, only a delirious, uncaring abandon that would call for ultra-skilful handling on her part and evasions more adroit than she had yet brought into play.

On a day of intermittent sunshine and high winds, Eulalie hailed Benton on Fifth Avenue—she was at the wheel of her roadster; giddy as the weather in a chic plush turban sporting a yellow devil's-horn and a plush cape lined with amber brocade.

She ran her roadster to the curb—he was a-foot.

"Good-morning," she said, gaily.

"A very good morning!" he emphasized, overjoyed to see her.

"Where are you going?" she asked, rather as if she had the right to question him.

"To the business of the day," he said, laughing.

"To Wall Street?—in such weather?" She unlatched the door of her car. "Come along with me wherever I'm going," saucily. "Let's make a day of it."

He was bareheaded in the wind, dark locks blowing up from his forehead.

"Be good, and ride on," he told her. "You can be tempting!"

She wheeled him, with a slang that might have seemed dubious on lips less cleverly rouged.

"C'mon, let's double-cross your Wall Street. This don't-care wind—C'mon!"

"If you put it like that—" He opened the door of the roadster, and stepped in.

She shrugged. "Leave it to the jargon of the streets to lure a man!"

Her blowing devil's-horn and jaunty cape made her appear rather piquant, in a wind that set her eyes sparkling like mica.

She drove easily and well; veering West at Forty-second Street.

"Where's the wind taking us?" he inquired, settling comfortably in his seat; stretching his long legs and planting his hat more firmly.

"Have you ever lunched in Whippany?" she counter-questioned.

"Never heard of it. Where is it?"

"In Jersey, beyond the Oranges—

hardly more than a crooked thoroughfare and some criss-cross byways; half-frozen chickens that squawk, dogs that look flea-bitten; roads tolerable, scenery unnoticeable."

"Why Whippany?" He watched the way she handled the steering-wheel.

"The word came into my head—may be the wind blew it in. I dined in Whippany once, when we had a blow-out."

"*We?*" He made an ironical gesture, half sighing. "Every wind that blows has blown before!"

She nodded. "Hasn't there ever flown across your mind a name like Whippany?"

"Of course," imperturbably. "You remember a poorly cooked meal, a *tête-a-tête*—"

"A particularly atrocious salad, spots on table napery, something somebody said to help the poor meal along—"

"Whippany! What queer things people remember!"

They crossed the Weehawken Ferry. The river was mud-coloured, topped by white crests. The wind smelled of tar and many things.

From the ferry-landing, Eulalie took an upgrade to the Hudson County Boulevard—they talked of roads and inns, recalled comical motor incidents, discussed the different parts of the country. Their route had the average landmarks; trolley intersections, cemeteries, bridges, forks, service depots, golf grounds, post offices and monuments. The long run on the Valley Road put a keen edge to their appetites, and they were ready for any sort of luncheon by the time they reached the road-sign that led into Whippany.

"The place where we dined," said Eulalie, pointing out a blackened foundation and solitary chimney on the crooked thoroughfare, "seems to have gone up in smoke!"

He surveyed the charred remains of an inn. "It's never safe to re-tour a spot of chance romance. Better seek verdant places." Drily, "I should have warned you against such reconnoitring."

"Warnings," she retorted, "are futile. The only places they seem to fit are tailroad crossings."

"Give me the wheel," he said. "Change places with me and enjoy a cigarette—while I find somewhere to eat."

She complied; fishing her cigarette-case from an inner pocket of her cape, lighting one for him and one for herself.

She glanced at his hand on the wheel.

Making herself comfortable and stretching her limbs, "Where's the wind taking us, now?"

He reversed the car at a fork of the road.

"Have you ever lunched in McClouds?"

She was reflective. "We passed the village of McClouds on our way here, straight downgrade—"

"In McClouds, on the edge of the Oranges," he said, "there are half-frozen chickens that squawk, dogs that look flea-bitten; and there's an inn that serves a poorly cooked meal—if it hasn't burned down, or blown out." He increased the speed, without looking at her.

"What queer places people remember!" she ruminated, smoking her cigarette.

The roadster made the run back to McClouds—to an inn whose shutters rattled in the wind, a tumble-down edifice set obliquely on a hill.

Eulalie stepped from the machine, giving herself the luxury of a stretch and a grimace.

"Somebody usually says something to help the poor meals along," he reminded her, as they started up the rickety steps of the hillside hostelry.

"Don't depend on me for helpful repartee," she told him. "My inn was burned out. You saw it, in all its ruin. I shan't soon forgive you."

She halted on the precipitate steps. "Do a favour for me—go back to the car and bring me the joke-book you'll find under the cushions. It will help us over the meal."

They lunched at a table whose floral decoration consisted of some dusty immortels in a Chinese jar. Their host was a fatty man, reduced to a state of dejection by the advent of two guests in an off season; he assured them that, in the season, his cuisine afforded the best of everything for discriminating tourists; his menu to-day consisted of hot sausages, baked yams, fruit muffins and coffee.

Over the coffee-cups, Eulalie opened her joke-book, one of those naïvely bound pamphlets sometimes found under the cushions of surprisingly nice-appearing cars—a virgin in the Misses Wailes' finishing school had introduced Eulalie to this form of entertainment, one midnight.

She delicately jiggled the crisp pages, eyes down, mouth mischievous. She had taken off her cape. In a lustre frock of amber satin, whose over-tunic and loose smart waist were banded with fringe insertion the colour of her devil's-horn, with a strand of beryls dripping to her hips, she was a vivid product of her mother's conscience, her governess, and her finishing school. Easily as a maiden of olden times might have read lilting rondelays to her lover, she entertained Benton with several stories whose points were "hot," to put it mildly.

In the middle of reading to him, she closed the book and tossed it away. "Stuff; isn't it?"

He had laughed at the stories, as a man laughs at a sophisticated child.

Now, he said, over the coffee-cups:

"That's a bad little book for a good little girl to have. Who gave it to you? Not, I hope, the 'he' who dined with you in Whippany."

She was lighting an after-luncheon weed, daintily clicking the match alight with her finger-nail. "I purchased it. In a modest book shop."

Her eyes met his; and she laughed.

She rose, and strolled to one of the windows: standing there with her back to him and in a spiral of thin smoke rising over her shoulder.

Watching the bare limbs of trees jig in the wind, there drifted across her face a touch of self-contempt, a cloud of introspection bordering on moodiness. A smile that curled her mouth and narrowed her eyes chased this expression away.

She half turned toward him, a shoulder propped against the window-sash, cigarette dripping indolently from her fingers.

Her idle, measuring glance seemed to ask, "What now?"

He came to her, smiling. His hands reached for her shoulders, turning her about until they were face to face; and he was able to make a critical examination of her features in the bleak light from the window.

Insolently, impudently, her all but flawless countenance invited his inspection.

His hands were inclined to follow the curves of her shoulders—

She slipped from under his touch.

She made an impulsive detour of the room; laughing at a picture in oils of a clumsy naiad gambolling amid pondweeds, winking into the glass eyes of a stuffed vulture, glancing into a wall-mirror, and coming upon an old horn graphaphone, with a croon of delight: "C'mon, let's dance!"

Gleefully she turned the crank, adjusted the horn, touched the lever and applied the needle—swaying like a little rowdy to the crude, uncaring rhythm that blared into her face, she held out her arms to him.

Eulalie could dance! To-day, she might have been of Hottentot origin, or a houri of the streets, as she trod the rough floor in his arms; around the table still cluttered with the meal, around the ornate, shoddy chairs, by the windows where the shutters were banging in the wind, to the jangling riotous music from the brass horn. She burrowed her head on his shoulder and her face came up framed in loose curls—the bit of ungrooming

changed her, modifying each refinement and exploiting each allurement.

The wheeze died stridently in the throat of the horn, and near the windows he flung her back in his arms to scan her with her hair falling—he laughed at her, holding her so.

"Naughty girl!" he said, and released her with a mock violence that sent her reeling.

She recovered her equilibrium lightly, hands at her hair as she leaned, breathless, against the table. She regarded him, biting her lip.

Outside, the wind was rising.

A sudden gust heaved a shutter from its hinges, clattering it into a gutter.

"There's a storm coming," she said, twisting up her hair.

He crossed the room for her cape. "Yes. We'd better get back. Or shall we stay here until it's over?"

"Let's race it." She was slipping into her wraps, dipping into amber-lined pockets for her gloves. At the mirror, she used lip-stick and powder-puff tellingly. She fitted her fingers into the gloves.

Benton summoned the innkeeper and settled for the meal. The sky was growing blacker, the gleams of sunlight had gone.

"We'll be caught," he cautioned her, as they went down the steps to her roadster.

She let him put up the hood and take the wheel, while she adjusted the wind-shield.

"It's going to be a corker!" she said, of the storm.

"It's going to catch us," he reiterated, watching her.

"Race it," she dictated, briefly.

He took her at her word and for the next few minutes the wind howled in their mouths and ears.

"Had enough?" he finally laughed, conceding to the speed laws.

Her eyes slid around to him, mirthfully. "Enough?" she drawled, with questioning lips.

"Be good," he admonished; refusing to kiss her on the lonely Valley Road. "We mustn't philander in this tempest."

He gave his attention to the wheel.

III

THE storm was beginning; drives of wind and drives of rain. The hills were blurred. She bent forward to use the wind-shield cleaner with a deft twist of her fingers. At one of the turnings in the road, they passed a boy and a girl running hand-in-hand from the storm; the girl was afraid, clinging to the hand guiding her—they had a fleet glimpse of an innocent, startled face, eyes blind in the rain, mouth palpitant, nostrils wide, colour tumultuous. Eulalie rendered homage to this chance picture of undefiled youth by taking out her vanity mirror, toning down the colour of her lips with a thoughtful finger, readjusting each feature of her face; and turning on her companion a countenance luminous in its naiveté, its startled dreaminess, its virginal affright.

A second later, she was volatile, sighing,

"'Give me your lips to kiss,
My heart's a feather;
Ah, methinks life is this—
Love and wild weather!'"

The storm was upon them; intermingling drives of rain and wind. There was no sign of life along the road. The trees seemed jiggling in the gales. Freshets blew under the hood of the car. The storm was over them, under them, about them; water beating in on them, wind enclosing them; the long, deserted road where the boy and girl had been running, the crude, uncaring rhythm of nature in abandon.

The roadster came to a halt. He kissed her. . . . Eulalie found herself cowering, with her hand outflung.

. . . He was driving again, hard.

She was inclined to whimper to her-

self, at first. He had not kissed her like this before. There had been no scrutiny, no flushed laughter. He had simply drawn all he pleased from her lips, and put her away. She was rendered un-clever by the caress; it slackened her wits—while it tore her with the light rage of comprehension. She was mute, pliable, compliant. She longed to creep, bedraggled, close to him, for another kiss—like that. He was the man she had been waiting for, the cool, cynical hoodlum! She yearned to feel his arms about her and fight off any release, to drown in a storm of his kisses.

Stealing a glance at his profile, she cuddled in her seat, breathing unevenly.

She became acutely conscious of him, forgetful for the nonce of herself. A warm sort of drowsiness stole through her blood, while there flickered through her consciousness waves of something akin to regret, shame, humiliation, and prayer.

Her small, wary face betrayed a new expression, moisture glimmering on the lashes, pallor sweeping the cheeks, tremors touching the mouth. There came over her mind and over her a sensation that she did not understand—Though Eulalie had been conscientiously instructed in sexology, Mrs. Blair Graze had told her child nothing of love; Miss Vermes had attended no lectures on the immortal passion; the Misses Wailes had not employed Cupid as a teacher in their seminary.

The trip in the storm was a silent one.

Wind and water everywhere; scurrying pedestrians; swelling rivers; wet macadam and concrete; the cold and sheltered sweeps of Long Island—the motor-porch of her home.

"Come have tea," she said to him.

"Thanks, I will." He followed her in.

While the storm ran down, Eulalie poured Benton tea and passed him cake in front of the usual log fire. Her mood was hard to define. One minute, she served him with tender hands and tenderer glances. The next minute, she held him off with raillery brittle as it was insincere. His mood matched hers. One minute, he was serving her. The next, he was holding her off. The half hour passed without amorous avowals.

He rose to go.

"We've had our sassy day together," he said smiling. "What next?"

Her shoulders suggested a shrug.

"What now?"

"I believe—" he began.

"Do you?" ironically.

She moved farther from him, with a dawdle in her step.

He held out his arms to her.

"Come on," he laughed.

She shook her head, moving to the fire-fender.

"All right," he said, philosophical. But his hands reached for her again, came groping for her.

She eyed him, with her twisted smile of eighteen.

With the firelight on her hair and face, she held up her betrothal hand.

"I suppose, you're going to ask me to marry you," she said.

His reply came quickly.

"Do you wish me to?"

She sank into a chair, lolled in it with her rather inimitable grace and fleeting impression of laxity; looking up at him.

"Come back this evening," she suggested. "For your answer."

"All right." His philosophy sustained him.

She reached for her cigarette-case, igniting a match with the clip of her finger-nail. Smoking, she was nonchalantly conscious of the somewhat deliberate survey he made of her; she even returned the curious look that took stock of loosened hair, sooty eyes, red mouth, waxen chin, girlish hands, curving waist and insolent length of ankle.

"*Au revoir*, till we kiss again," she murmured.

Benton laughed.

"Good-bye till then, nocturnal bloom."

He gave her a farewell look, and left.

IV

She listened to his quick footsteps and the closing of the front door.

Tossing her cigarette into the fire, she drew a slow breath that held her quiescent and brought waves of unaccustomed colour to her face. Her eyes closed. She buried her head between her knees, arms outstretched, fingers interlacing— Giving herself up to thoughts of him, hers was the delirious, uncaring abandon. The quality of these emotions told her that her time had come!

In her enlightened, modern young soul, she cogitated. Her sense of delirium gave place to a sane callosity. Reaching for another cigarette, she began to ask herself questions. What did she know of Gregg Benton? What was he like? What were his vices and his virtues?—had he a clean bill of health? Smoking furiously—he was decent enough looking, but could one tell?— The cigarette lagged in her fingers. Her eyes fled to a mirror.

Eulalie's father came in, while she was sitting there. She looked at him from under her shadowy lashes. Her mother had told her something of her father, and the beauties of town; the Misses Wailes had invested all men with an insatiable thirst for beauty; Miss Vermes had had a third cousin whose husband— Nonsensical whisperings! She had taken them lightly, but they still echoed in her ears.

She rose, and went up to her own quarters. There, she did some more thinking. Did she care to marry a man whose will was stronger than hers? Would she not be swept up by Benton, swallowed—devastated? Hadn't she been instructed to hold the whip-hand? Wasn't self-preservation impossible, if one cared too much? In view of the dangers and responsibilities involved, was such a matrimonial flight worth the taking?

Old stories, lectures and pictures were thrown again on the screen of Eulalie's mind. She saw herself a very little creature obediently hearkening to her mother, trotting along with her hand in Miss Vermes', frisking from under the ethics advocated by the Misses Wailes; taking all of them frivolously, yet being moulded by them—

She thought of love, in an abstract way; it was said that love was blind, if so, what chance had she, who, before she came to the loving age, had been made to see?—she had heard that love was grounded on respect—not for her the glamour and romance that invests a man with godhood and finds ashes of roses in the gradual, natural disillusionment—

If she went down to Benton to-night, there could be no dalliance, no adroit withdrawals. A storm! his kiss! She had been helpless. If she went down to him to-night she would promise to marry him.

Eulalie contemplated putting out her finger and pressing an electric button; telling a servant that she would not be at home that evening to anyone. But she didn't. She sought her dressing-room, and tubbed—her lethargy vanished before a fanfare of physical well-being.

In her boudoir, she brushed and repiled her hair. The frock she chose was a trifle of net and silver cloth hung with garlands of rosebuds; she looked into and closed her jewel-case, barely tipped her perfume decanter, and wielded her clever lip-stick very lightly. She went down the stairs, looking her best.

Eulalie dined. Her father had come and gone, in his habitual fashion.

After dinner, she prowled the lower part of the house, clicked on a light here and clicked off a light there; saw by the mirrors that she was milk-white, resplendent, and, with a little laugh, flung herself on a divan.

Nestling among cushions of silken weave, she waited for Gregg Benton.

She appeared very delectable, with her feet tucked under her silver skirt, her shoulders and arms shrouded in flowing net and her slight bust confined by a silver girdle. Her thoughts were honeyed. When Benton came tonight she would be sweet as the girl they had passed on the Valley Road; she would coo to him; the face she tilted would appear shy, suffused—And she would promise to marry him. Nested in the downy cushions, her lashes swept her cheeks, a smile played on her mouth, her breath came and went, softly.

An hour passed. Two. Three!

She sat up and put her chin on her knees. It became apparent to her that Gregg Benton was not coming. And—as he was not coming—he did not wish to marry her! Why? Her eyes narrowed.

She indulged in conjectures, submitting herself to as quizzing a scrutiny as Benton had ever given her and analyzing her failure to ensnare this man who hadn't bored her to satiety: It might be that she had been too easy. Or it might be— Her conjectures were made levelly: Perhaps, a man would rather tell than listen to ticklish anecdotes. May be, if there was immoderate dancing, he preferred damsels he didn't care a damn for. Possibly, he had envied the boy in the storm whose girl was obviously untrained and untaught! Very possibly, he had had enough of Eulalie, in the storm. She took her chin from her knees to hurl a cushion the length of the room, venting a fury of futility in a purposeless throw and play of muscle; while her eyes were, in turn, derisive, contentious, jeering, tragic, raging—fagged.

Eulalie concluded that Benton had not come because he had little to teach her—or to take from her!

Which was true enough.

NO COMPENSATION

By Harry Kemp

SING if you will of aging
And the great peace that comes
When pulses go no longer
Like men that march with drums;

Though all life's ache and tumult
Die out from heart and brain,
Age brings no compensation
For loss of Youth's sweet pain.

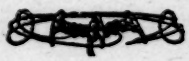
A MAN'S metier may be gauged by whether he regards a kiss as a pleasant way to begin an evening or to end one.

YOU

By David Morton

AROUND you wakes the ferment of old war,
And pride of towered cities that are dust;
You are the calm, white peace they battled for,
And you are crimson empires sunk in lust.
Across your eyes the bannered armies go,
And on your brow the sleep of armies slain;
You are the word the sages sought to know,
The saint's white dream, the lover's loss—and gain.

Here where you sit beside me in the dark,
I drink the waters of those ancient springs
Meeting in you, and come at least to mark
How Life may be at once a thousand things:
Battle and peace, and music false or true,
Dream and disaster. . . . And the whole is You.



KISS, not when the girl expects it, but when she merely has hopes. *That* is art!

THERE are two kinds of girls. Most men like the other kind.

THE laughs of to-day are the wrinkles of to-morrow.

FOR THE WORLD'S CHAMPIONSHIP

By J. L. Morgan

I

THE newspapers had columns about the tragedy, including, of course, the usual diagrams, dotted lines and crosses indicating where the bodies were found. The grisly details were sickening. Three dead, and a fourth with his throat cut from ear to ear with a tin-opener. Axes, hatchets, butcher-knives and a corkscrew were found in the dead men's hands, and the overturned furniture and the gory carpet and walls of the shooting lodge evidenced a terrible battle.

It was all Taylor's fault. At least he started it, and Phil is a devil of a good fellow at that. For years Taylor was one of our crowd, used to foregather with us around our own particular table in the grill-room of the club, and we all enjoyed his wit and repartee, which was very good for a lawyer. I'm throwing no slurs at lawyers, though they do talk shop a good deal.

Anyhow, to get back to Taylor, the railroad removed him to Philadelphia and we only saw him on his occasional business trips to our city; then we gave him an ovation. When Taylor came to town no one went home to dinner. That's the kind of a fellow he was. I could tell you stories by the hour about Taylor, but here I must confine myself to an account of the Duck Island tragedy, and I'll try and tell it without bias, prejudice or exaggeration.

Taylor came to town, and, as usual, something started. It was late of a rainy afternoon when he walked in on us at the club—came in grinning, with a confident anticipation of his reception, which I will say was not lacking. There were the usual glad huzzahs and he was forced immediately, and not unwillingly, into an empty seat at the table.

I may as well admit here and now that although there had been some prohibitory legislation we were not entirely without the means of gullet-wetting. Thanks to the ingenuity of some of our legal members, a "locker system" had been installed, and while this device might land us all in jail it added a certain zest and every drink was a thrill. After about the third libation Mr. Taylor's admiration for our "system" became boundless. He expressed himself at length and with much praise of the authors thereof—of whom there were several present—and added a few suggestions of his own, involving leases, powers of attorney, and other complicated legal instruments, all of which were, of course, designed to flabbergast and numb the brain of any meddlesome official.

Highly flattered, we put our "system" through its tricks. We showed Mr. Taylor what it could do. Enthusiasm prevailed, and the wit and repartee bantered back and forth was, I may say, brilliant—or at least it seemed so to me at the time. Our guest was pressed to stay for dinner. To this demand he surrendered unconditionally, and, after some telephoning (a few of us were married) the repast was ordered. It promised to be a rare evening.

Then disaster approached in the person of Mr. Foster T. Flood.

"Look out, boys, here *he* comes!" cautioned Mr. Webster.

Immediately we dived into our pockets and produced all the letters and papers we could find and put on a great show of a private business conference of the most secret nature. All of which availed us nothing, for Mr. Flood drew up a chair and seated himself among us. Then he started the conversational geyser for which he was infamous.

It's too long a story to tell how Flood got into our club. Slips occur in all clubs, but I venture none ever made such a ghastly mistake as ours did in admitting Flood. We had tried to rid ourselves of him by every means except assassination, and even this was suggested by the hat boy, Jimmie Ryan, who offered to have him privately killed for twelve dollars—an impertinence for which he was immediately discharged (and as quickly hired as office boy by an admiring member, and at a better salary).

Flood was, so he incessantly told us, a "self-made man." It was the consensus of opinion around the club that it was a poor job. However, he was just what he wanted to be, which was a loud, blatant nuisance.

"Just sold twelve of our XX silos and a half gross of hog troughs," he announced, pounding the bell noisily. "What are you gents going to have?"

We stared at him long, cold, silently—for which he was grateful; and we refused his invitation, for which he was even more grateful. Nothing less than a pile-driver would have had the slightest effect on him.

"Yes, sir, that XX is a sure winner," he went on. "It's got every other silo backed off the board."

Here he applied his handkerchief to his nose and blew a clarion blast, not, however, dropping a word or a syllable during the process. "It's heavily galvanized, cheap in price, and guaranteed for twenty years!"

Mr. Flood's business was, as may be guessed, that of agent for a line of patent gimcracks of interest to farmers. He was a firm believer in the advertising power of the human voice, and he extolled the perfections of his wares at all times and places.

From silos to hog troughs Flood's discourse very naturally turned, and he was in the middle of this when Billy Duncan gave Herman, our waiter, the signal. This seeming scratch of the ear resulted a few minutes later in a call to the telephone, which the bellboy told Mr. Flood was very urgent.

We watched him for the short instant that he was at the instrument at the other side of the room, and we were much relieved to see him drop the receiver and depart in hot haste.

"What did you tell him this time, Herman?" inquired Duncan, after the waiter had re-entered the room.

"I told him," replied Herman, "that his warehouse was on fire."

Herman Niemeyer, I will say, was a man of considerable diplomatic experience. For over twenty years he had been a waiter in the club grill, and he knew most of us like a father—or better. Of him, however, more later.

"Very good, Herman," commended Duncan. "But don't forget to have another one handy for him; he might come back."

He turned to Taylor with a word of explanation: "That's one of our new members, Phil. Without doubt he's the greatest bore in the world."

"He's a pest all right," laughed Taylor. "I can see that. But as to being the greatest living nuisance, I'll have to differ with you. We have a man in our town, old Judge Fosdick, whom I would back rather freely for the world's championship. Men faint on the street when they see him coming."

"Say," put in Jim Webster, "if you're going to have a contest I want to nominate my brother-in-law. Tuttle is his name, and I'll go broke on him."

We all laughed, but Taylor became suddenly serious.

"A contest," he mused aloud. "Why not? It's a splendid idea!"

"Of course," agreed Billy Duncan, "if it were practical. But unfortunately it isn't."

"But it *is* practical," argued Taylor, sharply. "Nothing easier in the world!"

Phil Taylor was a man of splendid imagination. And with this he had unusual talent as an organizer. With him nothing was impossible.

"How could it be arranged?" inquired Duncan, grinning.

Taylor pondered a minute.

"Well," he said slowly, "the thing to do would be to get them all together—all under one canvas, as the circus people say. Then start 'em to going, and the one who could talk down the others would be declared the winner. Of course there would be rules and all that."

"How would it do to invite them down to Duck Island?" suggested Webster. "There's no one there now and they'd have the island all to themselves."

Billy Duncan's face suddenly brightened.

"And say," he said, becoming infected with the idea, "we could have Simpson go over with the motor boat twice a day, morning and evening, and take away the quitters. The last man on the island would be the winner."

"Fine! Fine!" ejaculated Taylor. "It's as simple as a, b, c."

It was a new sort of sport, this, and we all became quite enthusiastic. Probably the drinks had something to do with it, but the idea of sponsoring a contest to decide who was the world's champion bore was both novel and pleasing.

"Of course," said Taylor, "while you club boys think highly of your fellow-member, Flood, I am rather sanguine of the success of Judge Fosdick—and I want to put some money on him, too."

The betting feature was now taken up and disposed of—thanks to Taylor—easily and quickly. It was decided to pool the bets on the Paris-mutual plan—the backers of the winner to divide all the other money between them.

The conversation as to the merits of the various contenders became general and somewhat warm. Taylor was strong for Fosdick; Webster touted his brother-in-law, Tuttle; and the other five raised their voices in behalf of Flood.

Now I had a candidate myself—a pinhead by the name of Jim Johnson. I knew what Johnson could do. I had seen him empty a summer hotel in a single day, and it didn't seem fair to the others to enter him. But a few drinks will make a difference. When my friends began to brag about the abilities of their own pet bores my sporting blood became aroused. I told them frankly that Johnson was in a class by himself; that he would make the other entries look like a lot of burros in a race with a Derby winner. But they only hooted. Then I got mad. I can remember, rather indistinctly, of saying something to the effect that "money talks," and of slamming a roll of bills on the table. Then things began to fade.

II

THE next day the whole thing seemed silly. I'm sorry to say that we all had rather too much to drink—but the thing that disturbed me most was the hard, cold, undeniable fact that I had put up three hundred dollars. I hadn't the face to ask it back, and to tell the truth I don't know that I wanted it back, for Johnson looked like a cinch. However, I had an idea that the affair would be called off, and I decided to say no more about it.

But it wasn't called off. For, two days later, Billy Duncan, the stakeholder, got a letter from Taylor—enclosing a draft for two thousand dollars, and hinting of more to follow! Phil wrote that most of the money had been subscribed by the local bar, and that the news had hardly started. He hinted that within a week every lawyer in Philadelphia would have a bet down on the Judge, and, privately, he urged Duncan to get on the good thing himself.

Meantime our fellow-members were quietly putting their money on Flood. There was a score of wagers on his chances the very first day, ranging from fifty to a thousand. At this time Fosdick and Flood seemed to be about equal in the betting, Johnson next, and Tuttle nowhere.

On the following day, Wednesday, quite by accident I ran into John B. Gage. Of course you have heard of "Bet-you-a-million" Gage. He's one of the big plungers in Wall Street, with his name in the papers most every day in connection with some huge transaction in stocks, or horse races, or just plain gambling at French Lick or Palm Beach.

Merely with the thought of entertaining Gage for a few minutes, I told him of the approaching contest. He was mildly interested, laughed, said he'd watch the papers to see the outcome, and was about to pass on, when I mentioned Johnson. Then you should have seen the change. His jaw snapped and a steely look came into his grey eyes.

"Say," he said, "is this a private game, or can anyone get in?"

Just why I let Gage in is unfathomable to me to this day. It certainly was to my interest to keep Johnson a dark horse, for with no other backers I stood to win all the money wagered on the others. But a foolish enthusiasm prevailed and I waxed loud in Johnson's praise.

"Good God, Charlie," cried Gage, "you don't have to tell me anything about Johnson. I know him!"

He pulled from his pocket a chequebook and rapidly scribbled on it.

"Yes, sir, I travelled a day on the train with Johnson and had nervous prostration for two years. He's a second Attila!—a Genghis Khan! Here"—he handed me a cheque for ten thousand dollars, "put that on Johnson, straight, to win."

He was off and gone before I could say anything, leaving me standing on the corner with his cheque in my hand. I turned and walked slowly back to my office, where I found Jim Webster waiting for me.

Webster's mission was only to borrow five thousand dollars—from me! I thanked him for the compliment; then I told him that I didn't have five thousand dollars, which was the truth.

"But listen, Charlie," he pleaded. "We might as well have that money as anybody. Tuttle's a cinch! We'll go in together and split fifty-fifty!"

I shook my head and told him frankly that nothing could alienate me from Johnson.

Webster listened impatiently.

"Hear me through, Charlie," he implored. "Then you can make your decision."

I sat down and my friend drew up his chair close to mine. He was terribly in earnest.

"First," he began, "let me tell you that Tuttle has had five wives. Does that mean anything to you?"

"No," I replied slowly, "I don't know that it does."

He leaned across the table, his eyes boring into mine.

"Three of them, Charlie," he said impressively, "are in as many sanatoriums, and the other two died of some kind of jimjams—nerves!"

I paled. For I saw at once that Tuttle was no mean contender.

"How does he do it?" I asked.

"Just talks—that's all. Let me introduce you, Charlie, and if he don't turn you into a raving maniac in twenty minutes, I'll buy the drinks."

I declined the test.

"He's got damp hands, Charlie, and after you shake with him you've got to take a bath. And they are hot hands, too, Charlie, and he puts them all over you when he talks—on your neck, and your elbow, and your knee. He's one of those intensive talkers—gets right up in front of you, Charlie, close up, like he's going to give you a kiss—paws you all the time, and keeps asking, 'Do you get me? Do you get me?'"

"What does he talk about?" I inquired.

My tone indicated a lightness that I positively did not feel.

"Nothing! Absolutely nothing! Just prattles along like a dog on a treadmill. He never gets anywhere—but his endurance, Charlie, is marvellous! Day and night, a constant stream of words without an idea or a thought."

"He must say something," I insisted. "He'd have to utter a thought—sometime—even if it was accidental."

"Well," confessed Webster, "once I did hear tell about hitting a golf ball, or something—but, Charlie, it took him six hours to unload it, and even then I had to help him out. That was the time they had to send me to Battle Creek," he added significantly.

But I remained loyal to Johnson, notwithstanding this inside information of Tuttle. And not without cause.

Johnson was a small-town lawyer with a large, round, rich voice—the resonant, sonorous, street car, hotel lobby, elevator kind. And with it Johnson was infatuated to madness. He let it out on all occasions—modulated it with the liquid flutings of the clarionet, let it growl in the lower tones of the bass viol, boom in the deep chest tones of the kettle drum, and then allow it to work up in easy graduations on the in-take, concertina-fashion, to the whining strain of the zither. He was an officer in a score of fraternal orders and during the ceremonial rites of these Johnson lived in another world. In private life he had two themes of which he never tired. They were: (a) what he told the Court, and (b) his New England ancestry, with the various and sundry ramifications of the same. Either topic was good for six months without stopping for water, wind, or gas.

Meantime the Contest Committee had been busy. Invitations on the stationery of the Duck Island Shooting Club had been mailed, each with a lure calculated to enforce attendance. The one addressed to Judge Fosdick hinted that a cabinet minister would be present at the week-end party, as the Judge was politically ambitious, his presence was assured.

Flood received an invitation of six words—no one ever wanted him anywhere and a more elaborate one would look like a trap:

Tuttle was told to bring his golf clubs; and the message to Johnson insinuated that it was barely possible that he might be present at the birth of a new, complicated, and highly ceremonial secret order.

The Rules Committee had framed an elaborate document of some fifty pages, covering every possible contingency, including a broad and comprehensive system of "points" by which the contestants could be graded for second, third, and fourth money. An umpire, the manner of his selection, duties, authority and so on, was thoroughly outlined in one section, and while this was an easy matter to put down on paper it was more difficult of execution. No one would volunteer; all refused to be drafted. We elected Herman, finally, who only accepted under strong compulsion and promise of rich reward.

III

GAGE'S wager of ten thousand made a sensation. It also increased the betting, for while a spectacular plunger like Gage always has a large following, there are others who play the long shots, attracted by the larger odds. So it happened that both Fosdick and Flood became more popular, and there were not a few small sums laid on the unknown—Tuttle. Nothing else was talked of at the Club.

On Thursday Taylor called up by long distance and inquired if he might bring a brass band and a special train of two thousand Fosdick rooters. Upon being denied this by the chairman, Taylor quietly informed him that a draft was in the mail and that it was to be placed on the Philadelphia candidate. It called for thirty-seven thousand dollars. Taylor further informed

him that another wager of a hundred thousand would be over-subscribed by six o'clock, and that it would be forwarded at once. He also said that a petition was being framed to make the day of Fosdick's departure a legal holiday, and that the majority of the local bar were then under alcoholic influence in anticipation thereof.

This was news, indeed! Where before there had been sensation, there was now wild excitement. Some were for calling the event off and making it international. But as a great deal of money had been wagered this could not very well be done. Moreover, it was patriotically argued that as the American bore was the deadliest of all known species, an American champion must necessarily be a world's champion. No one could controvert this, so the contest stood as originally conceived—for the world's championship.

Jim Webster showed up about five with a pitiful thirty-six hundred of Tuttle money. He said it had all been raised in the family, but that there was a rich uncle yet to be heard from, who undoubtedly would place twenty-five, maybe fifty, thousand. I think this was braggadocio on Jim's part, for I had heard him talk about that rich uncle before.

The confidence of the Fosdick following had been a mystery to me, but I was soon to be illuminated. By rare luck I had at dinner that evening a gentleman from Philadelphia, and of him I made inquiry.

"Do you know Judge Elias P. Fosdick?" I asked.

He looked startled.

"Why?" he parried.

I explained that I had heard a great deal about the Judge, and that it was possible that I might have the pleasure of meeting him at a week-end shooting party.

My friend became instantly alarmed.

"If he goes, you stay away!" he warned. "Fosdick is more deadly than the bubonic plague!"

Persistent questioning developed the fact that the Judge was indeed a frightful bore. A quarter of a century on the bench had made him a despot; he had lost all sense of the rights of others, and his egotism was that of a Nero. He was a story-teller—so he imagined. At the noon hour, before the opening of court, and after adjournment, he dragged out his ancient wheezes for general admiration. All lawyers were expected to laugh—and to laugh loud. Those who went into the most violent paroxysms fared best in his court. The stories were originated by Adam, embellished slightly by Noah, handed down through the ages to find a final resting place in a patent medicine almanac, only to be again discovered and brought to the light by Judge Fosdick.

It was no unusual thing for him to relate some of them fifteen or twenty times in a single day. There were five of them, and the local bar knew them better than it knew the statutes. Of late years Fosdick had begun to suspect that the tales were becoming familiar, for it was his habit to preface them with: "Gentlemen, you may have heard this before, but I am sure it will bear repetition. So . . ."

But this was not all. According to my informant the Judge was addicted to another vice so ghastly and terrible as to stagger human credulity.

"He's a big man, a whale of a man," said my friend, "looks like a skinned horse—*and he talks baby-talk!*"

"No!" I cried. "It cannot be true!"

My friend applied his handkerchief to his eyes and I saw that he was deeply affected.

"I hate to admit it," he said in a choking voice, "but it is true. Did you—did you ever . . . hear a three hundred pound man talk baby-talk?" he queried. "It's terrible—"

He broke down completely and I had to buy him a drink. Later, after he had pulled himself together, he explained that Fosdick was the parent of a nine-year-old child which, from the impression he got from Fosdick's

mimicry, was as near an absolute idiot as it is possible to be. I sent him back to his hotel in a taxi.

IV

It was a job getting them all together on the island, but by Saturday noon it had been accomplished and they were turned loose in the small clubhouse, a happy family, as the animal trainers say. Then we waited for the first bulletin from our diplomatic representative, Herman Niemeyer.

During this wait the committee thought it wise to look into the accounts of the official stakeholder, Billy Duncan. What it discovered was truly astounding. Duncan's books showed three hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars wagered on the contest! The Judge carried the weight of this, then came—the hitherto dark horse, Tuttle.

This surprised us all, but we learned that Webster's brother-in-law was a travelling auditor for a big railroad system and that the railroad boys were backing him to a man. From president to section hand they had planked their money down on Tuttle, and, Duncan said, if Tuttle didn't win it would be rather hard to explain. Flood had a large following in the hardware trade, and Johnson came last. This cheered me mightily, for I knew that if the race became one simply of endurance, Johnson would win in a canter.

The first word from Duck Island came to me privately and could not be considered official. It was a telegram from Herman, forwarded by the boatman, Jim Spriggs.

"It looks like Fosdick. Put a hundred on him for me.

"NIEMEYER"

Now I had no intention of making a bet for one of the club servants, and the next day I was very glad that I had not done so, for I received the following:

"Fosdick slowing up. Hedge fifty each on Tuttle and Johnson.

"NIEMEYER."

The official communications received from our representative and posted on the club bulletin board evidenced that the battle was going with varying fortunes and were read with great enthusiasm. The Philadelphia bar, so we learned from Taylor, had abandoned all business for the time being, and there were three head-end collisions on Tuttle's railroad. Then came a telegram from Niemeyer stating that he believed that he was losing his mind and that he wanted to get off the island at once, threatening heavy damages.

Things had gone so far now that there was nothing to do but stick it out, come what may. An ominous silence of two days followed—Spriggs, the boatman, was on a spree, but we didn't know it. Then on the third day came the news of the catastrophe.

What happened can best be learned by reading the sworn statement of Niemeyer upon his examination by the District Attorney:

My name is Herman Niemeyer. I am German, but bought liberty bonds. I have been a waiter at the Cosmos Club for over twenty years and know personally all who are responsible for the murders on Duck Island.

The plot was hatched and engineered by Mr. Philip Taylor, once a member of the club but now living in Philadelphia, and was an endurance contest to decide who among bores was the world's champion. There were four contestants: Mr. Flood, Judge Fosdick, Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Johnson, I was sent along as umpire, and was instructed to send bulletins twice each day to the club of how the contest was going.

District Attorney.—Was there money wagered on this?

Niemeyer.—Yes, sir. Thousands of dollars.

District Attorney.—Proceed.

Niemeyer.—Well, going over on the boat Saturday noon, Judge Fosdick told a story in baby-talk and the others got sick, though the water was rather smooth, the wind being from the south-east. That first day the Judge did most of the talking and I thought he would surely win. But the others hadn't started yet.

The next morning Mr. Flood rose early

and got a running start on the other three. He began on his silos, hog troughs and windmills, and was going strong when they all sat down to breakfast. Judge Fosdick tried to tell a story, but Mr. Flood drowned him out. In a few minutes he tried again, but with the same result. Then he called Mr. Flood "a damn fool!"

District Attorney.—Did the fight begin then?

Niemeyer.—No, sir. Mr. Flood took no offence—in fact he seemed rather pleased.

District Attorney.—Proceed.

Niemeyer.—Well, later in the day, at lunch I think it was, Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Johnson got into an argument—at least it sounded like an argument, though really it wasn't, for Mr. Tuttle was talking about the right way to "tee off," and Mr. Johnson was telling about a second cousin of his great-grandmother—from Massachusetts, I think she was, sir—but anyhow neither of them listened to the other, but just went right along. There wasn't a bit of trouble between them, sir, and I believe they could have been life-long friends—if they had lived. They kind of stuck together—it was beautiful, sir—and when Mr. Flood tried to get in they just talked a little louder and paid no attention. That's where Mr. Flood blew up. He got right sick and we had to put him to bed.

The Judge pouted all afternoon and stayed outside, though it was raining. But that evening Mr. Tuttle got him in a corner and told him how to swing a midiron. He planted his chair right down in front of the Judge and talked to him close-up, with his hands on the Judge's knees.

District Attorney.—Is that when Tuttle was killed with a tin-opener?

Niemeyer.—No sir. The battle didn't happen till the third day.

District Attorney.—Then what happened?

Niemeyer.—The Judge began to squirm around, and he coughed as hard as he could right in Mr. Tuttle's face, but Mr. Tuttle didn't move—just batted his eyes and went on. Then I saw the Judge reach for an iron poker near the fireplace and I got right scared. But just then Mr. Johnson started in on Mr. Tuttle's right—a sort of flank movement, sir—and the Judge escaped. After that it was nip and tuck between Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Johnson. Mr. Tuttle could talk the fastest, but Mr. Johnson was the loudest.

District Attorney.—Who won?

Niemeyer.—Neither, sir. It was a kind of a dead heat. They talked all night and the next morning I found them asleep in their chairs.

District Attorney.—Go on.

Niemeyer.—Well, that day the Judge and Mr. Flood being mad at everybody, talked to *me* and the two others joined in.

District Attorney.—Was that when you wired a demand to be taken off the island, and threatened suit?

Niemeyer.—Yes, sir. I was nearly crazy. They were all around me and going at once. It was terrible!

District Attorney.—Are you quite sure that *you* did not kill these men?

Niemeyer.—As God is my judge, I didn't! It happened the next day in a free-for-all among themselves,

District Attorney.—Well, proceed.

Niemeyer.—Things looked mighty bad that afternoon, and to make things worse the boatman, Spriggs, got drunk and never showed up till the following Friday—when, of course, it was too late. Thursday I thought I'd never live through the day. In fact I contemplated suicide. It was awful! I thought—

District Attorney.—Never mind what you thought. Tell what actually happened.

Niemeyer.—Well, Thursday afternoon it started in on a hard rain and everyone had to stay indoors. They all pouted for a while in silence and I began to think my prayers had been answered—but pretty soon Judge Fosdick started in on his baby-talk once more. It was the tenth time he told that same story in two days. Mr. Flood joined in on windmills, Mr. Tuttle on golf, and Mr. Johnson on his New England relatives. All going at once. The Judge raised his voice to a shout, so did Mr. Flood, and Mr. Tuttle, and Mr. Johnson.

The Judge was getting redder and redder in the face—and then without a word of warning he snatched a catsup bottle from the table and broke it over Mr. Flood's head. Then the fight was on. I don't know if it was the sight of the catsup or not—anyway, they all went raving mad at once, howled like hyenas, they did, sir. At first they tried to brain each other with cups and saucers and rocking chairs, and whatever was handy. I've never seen a livelier fight, sir, even at the Waiters' Club, and it was right interesting. But when they got out in the kitchen and got hold of axes, hatchets, butcher knives and such, I ran. The last thing I saw was Mr. Tuttle on the floor with Judge Fosdick on top of him, sir, cutting his throat with a tin-opener, and it was very dull and made the Judge swear, sir, most horribly.

The next thing I can remember was being picked up by a lumber schooner three miles from shore, just as I was sinking for the last time. I suppose I was so scared that I had tried to swim to the mainland, which was seven miles distant. That's all I know about it.

District Attorney.—You swear this is a true and correct statement?

Niemeyer.—Yes, sir, I do.

There is nothing I can add to Niemeyer's testimony. It covers the ground very well and leaves nothing for conjecture, and, of course, being

made under oath it is absolutely true in every detail.

There was deep gloom at the club for several days, naturally—and then Billy Duncan pointed out the silver lining.

"Boys," he said, "it's pretty sour the way the thing came out, especially about having to call all bets off, but there's one thing sure—and that is that we are finally rid of Foster T. Flood."

CODA

By T. F. Mitchell

SHE stood before the bar, a pathetic little thing. The sympathetic eyes of the court-room were all focussed upon her. Even the judge himself, moved by her wistful girlishness, paused before pronouncing sentence.

"Is there anything you would like to say?" he asked her, gently.

She turned her baby brown eyes upon him. A bit of a sob escaped her.

"No, you big fool!" she replied.

BACHELORIUM

By Earle Phares

SOMEWHERE in the world
There is a woman
Destined some day to become my wife.
I know that she exists
But I have not yet met her—

Hurray!

A WOMAN always remembers the men who have kissed her. What she forgets, as she grows older, is how she made them do it.

BEFORE marriage a man knows nothing about his wife. After marriage conditions change. He knows less.

BANKRUPT

By Williams M. Conselman

I AM afraid there is nothing left for you, my dear. I gave away the last of my possessions a long while ago to a girl with hair like yours and pale lips and heavy eyes. . . . That star over there I plucked in the past to hang as a pendant on the white throat of one of your forgotten predecessors, my dear. And I squandered all the silver of the moon buying warm kisses from one whose name I do not remember. I could give you a tune on my zither, but I have broken all its strings in playing foolish music for dancing, and my voice is cracked from singing little songs whose words made me laugh once, but fill me with melancholy now.

I am afraid there is nothing left for you. . . . I cannot give you a flower, for I mind well the June night that I gathered all the roses in the world and flung them at the feet of—who was it, now? Someone whose feet were remarkably small, and whose ankles were made to twinkle in the moonlight. It does not matter. . . . One wonders sometimes where they all could have gone. It puzzles me. I do not like to think about it.

You should have come sooner, before I had given everything away. There is nothing left for you now, unless—

Unless you take my heart.

AT PARTING

By Jean Allen

I WOULD that my love could hold you fast
As slender wire upholds great bridges;
As the glitter of sunlight on darkling water
Arrests and holds the reluctant eye;
As the remembered softness of summer nights
Loiters in the memory;
As fragrance from a garden lingers;
Thus would I enchain your thoughts
When distance measures the space between.

FOUR FAINT FRECKLES AND A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

HELEN deliberately applied the lip-stick to her mouth. Carefully she followed the line of her upper lip, tracing its perfect curve from one corner of her mouth to the other. Her lower lip was a trifle thin, she thought, so she thickened it slightly, and then examined the result. She was satisfied. Her profile was pleasing.

With a tiny frown on her forehead, she considered the four faint freckles on the side of her nose. Those freckles persisted in spite of lemon juice, face lotions, and perseverance. She had tried everything, everything that had ever been advertised, everything that had ever been suggested by sympathetic friends—and the freckles remained.

Must she spend the rest of her life cursed by four faint freckles? Somewhat ruefully she stopped examining them, and brushed her eyebrows. She was really proud of her eyebrows. They were clear and distinct, yet not thick. She dusted a little rice-powder over the offensive freckles and descended the stairs to the reception hall.

Helen expected a visitor this evening, and she had almost finished her preparations for his coming. She drew a comfortable chair within easy distance of the fire. With the all-seeing eye of the instinctive housewife, she detected a spot on the chair that had escaped the vigilance of the maid, and with her dainty kerchief she brushed away the dust. The lights in the room were subdued so that her freckles would not be noticed. A number of sentimental songs were placed conspicuously on the piano. After a final touch to her hair, she took up a book until he should arrive.

Men pursue some girls who are merely pretty. Other girls, though not pretty, have the knack of attracting men. And there are yet other girls who are not remarkably homely, or startlingly pretty, or unusually plain, or wonderfully lovely, and they are totally without masculine admirers.

Helen was a small, trim girl with a pleasant face, and the freckles that have been mentioned. She had her share of attention. The attention, however, was the customary politeness of the average man to the average woman. It contained nothing of affection, nothing of tenderness, nothing of love. Helen seemed to inspire a polite regard in the hearts of her men friends—and that was all.

Naturally she was not satisfied. Is any woman really happy unless she is in the middle of a romantic, exciting, violent love-affair? Doesn't she want perfumed kisses, and vehement protestations of undying affection, and exhibitions of jealous rage, and almost ceaseless tiffs?

She does.

Helen had never had a love-affair in her life. She had never received a letter that she could not have shown to her mother. She had never figured in an episode that could not have been witnessed by the neighbours. She had

never been accused of being a thoughtless, heartless, soulless flirt.

In her high-school days she wrote passionate letters in purple ink to a boy in her class. He did not reply. She had gone automobiling with an utter stranger, and he called her "a jolly little pal," and introduced her to his sister. She tried to flirt with two men at the same time, and they had talked the matter over with her, and were not angry at all.

To-night she expected a man she had known all her life. He was the son of an intimate friend of her father's and she knew exactly how Arthur Hollins regarded her. There had never been the slightest bit of emotion in their relations; they had merely been friends and companions since they were boy and girl together.

Helen thought over the almost romantic episodes in her life. There had been several men she cared for, but they all were absolutely indifferent to her—save that they liked her in a friendly way.

She was discouraged. She wanted to be loved, she wanted to be caressed, she wanted to be worshipped and adored. And Arthur Hollins would spend the evening discussing baseball, and politics, and their mutual acquaintances. Possibly he would ask her to go to the theatre with him, and she would accept. Then after she had given him a few sweet cakes and a glass of port, he would go home. The evening would have passed—and that was all.

She thought of the uninteresting, uneventful hours that were in store for her and began to grow melancholy. Must she remain always a "pal," a friend to every man she knew? Wouldn't anyone ever swear that she was a siren, a breaker of hearts, a menace to men? Must she be cursed by four faint freckles and a cheerful disposition all the rest of her life? She began to weep softly.

Arthur Hollins stepped into the room and saw her. She made a pathetic picture as she sat there, apparently unconscious of his arrival. But she did know that he had entered, and she was willing to let him see her weeping. In the depth of her feminine mind she concluded that she would play upon his sympathies, she would try the effect of tears. Every other time he had seen her, she had been cheerful and happy. Her troubles had been concealed under a care-free exterior. Now he would see her in a sorrowful mood.

He stared for a moment, nonplussed at what he saw. Then he became sympathetic.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

Her hand wavered toward him in a pathetic gesture. She was performing before an audience of one: herself. She began to enjoy the sweet satisfaction of being miserable. His futile attempts to understand were soothing.

"Has anything happened?" he asked.

"No." Her voice was small and subtly sad. "There's nothing the matter. . . ."

There was something the matter, and she knew the reasons for her tears. But he would not have realized their importance.

He came close to her and stood looking down upon her bowed figure. Her hands were over her face, and her shoulders drawn together. She was careful to keep actual tears from flowing, for if she wept her nose would become red.

"Has anyone been unpleasant to you?" he asked, "or have you been annoyed—?"

"No." There was a tiny trace of a sob in the word. She pointed to the chair she wished him to occupy. It was fairly near the one she sat in, and he drew it closer and tried to persuade her hands from her face.

"Then what—why—?" He was really confused by finding her so distressed by "nothing." Always before she had been cheerful.

"I just feel miserable," she said, and gave him a glimpse of her face.

She did not look as though she were seriously ill. Her complexion was good. Her lips, he thought, were exceptionally red. And he knew that if

she wished him to go home that she would frankly tell him so. They knew each other well enough for that.

Again he tried to draw her hands from her face, and this time she permitted it. But he did not drop her hands as he intended. Half-perceiving that she was not unwilling, he bent close to her, looking deeply into her eyes, while her hands clung to his.

Helen saw, with sudden delight, that he was about to kiss her. Her dainty soul drew back at the knowledge, while her lips puckered for the caress. She correctly anticipated his intentions, and an inner voice told her to smile, while another voice told her to remain serious.

For a moment he hesitated. The mental attitude of years had to be overcome in a second. Before, he had thought of her as an amiable companion, never as a girl with alluring lips.

He leaned over and kissed her. She did not resist, neither did she respond. Naturally he attempted to kiss her again. Her lips were deliciously fresh. But she sprang to her feet, crossed the room, and flung herself upon a couch and burst into tears. They were real tears.

"No. No!"

Her voice quivered with actual distress.

He was confused. She had deliberately permitted a caress, and manlike, he didn't see why he shouldn't do so again. But he was soon disillusioned.

"Horrid!" she said to herself. "Horrid! I made him kiss me. I made him!"

She reviled herself for her action, and still she was a bit glad, deep in her heart, that she was attractive enough to make him desire to repeat the experience.

Touching her hair to make sure that she was still appealing, she looked at him again. He was standing before her, evidently undecided whether he had been inexcusably rude, or whether he would be permitted to repeat his previous action.

"I can never trust you again," she said, her eyes downcast. She produced the impression that she was grievously hurt. "And I *did* like you so much!"

He pondered this for a moment.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"We had been such good friends!" she said. "I thought you cared for me in a friendly way— You've never tried to— Do you— Are you—"

Her voice trailed off into nothingness. This was his test. If he said he loved her— If he didn't say he did—

Courageously he replied.

"Helen, I have always thought of you as a chum, just as you considered me. But to-night—"

There was a deep note in his voice that she had never heard before. His tones thrilled her; she felt as though she had loved him without identifying the emotion. Memories of how he had looked years before grew within her heart. She brooded over them and they became tender, sacred things. His voice kept on, thrilling her incessantly with its love-tones.

"—To-night I see you as you always have been. I have been blind, but now— You are the one girl that every man hopes he will some day meet. I have had you near me all my life, and I did not know it. Now that I have found you, won't you—"

His courage failed him, and he stood confused, tongue-tied, irresolute.

Completely mistress of herself, with the taste of his kiss still upon her lips, Helen looked upon the havoc she had wrought. She knew, knew with the keen certainty of a woman, that he had been trapped by her cunning. She had, by a sob or two, and a tear or two, brought this specimen of the masculine gender to her feet.

And with this knowledge came the thought that, after all, the quarry was scarcely worth the chase. With the experience of this evening to encourage her, to give her confidence, she would never lack lovers. Inwardly she smiled at the simplicity of the game, it was so absurdly easy. Why hadn't she thought of it before?

When he had made his stumbling way from the house, Helen carefully examined her complexion. Again she frowned at the four faint freckles, but immediately afterwards she smiled at them. They were her most deadly weapons. Who would suspect a small and dainty miss who flaunted her freckles before the world? She would be treated with friendly consideration by all men. She need not angle for their attention by using such obvious bait as startling clothes, expensive perfumes, or a glaringly artificial complexion.

Thanks to the beguiling effect of her freckles, and aided somewhat by soothing voice and the ability to be convincingly pathetic, Helen felt that she was prepared for life.

CURIOSITY

By John F. Lord

WHEN we approached the crater of the volcano, I would not go near the edge for the world. My wife, with her usual fearlessness, however, walked right over to the rim. It was this action of hers, which overcame her fear, that prompted me to walk to the rim too. I wanted to see how far down she had fallen.

BIRDS in their little nests agree because the he-bird doesn't know what the she-bird is jabbering about.

NO man knows what love is until he has loved three different girls at the same time.

THERE are two ways of embarrassing a woman: by kissing her in the presence of either your wife or her husband.

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

By Edith Chapman

I

DELLA Price sank exhausted into a chair in one of the *Congress* drawing-rooms. Various factors had contributed to her exhaustion. The last, her abortive efforts at shopping. It was such a strain getting into and out of gowns, steeling oneself, meanwhile, to endure the veiled smiles or frankly contemptuous glances of the saleswomen as they tugged at the fastenings or searched futilely for models large enough.

After the first one or two shops she had been ready to give up. Never had there been a season of frocks adapted to such narrow lines. The world grew more insane every year. What woman wanted to look like a match?

Della's weak eyes filled with tears. Only five years ago she too had been slender and beautiful. Her fat had come so gradually that she hadn't noticed it, or been able to stop it; at least so she believed. The only way would have been to stop eating altogether, and one couldn't do that; one couldn't starve! Now it was too hopeless; the most heroic efforts brought so little result. This absence of result had been brought cruelly home to her that very morning. It was another factor contributing to her present depletion.

The forenoon she had spent with her masseuse, at the hands of whom she was turkish-bathed and rubbed and pounded every other day. The incentive to this had been furnished by her husband. He had agreed to give her the leopard coat—which with a rather poignant lack of discrimination she had set her heart on—if she would lose thirty pounds. This feat, however, seemed no nearer of realization than it had a month previous when the gauges had been set. On the scale that morning she had weighed a pound more.

The masseuse had appeared to assume no responsibility for this. "I can't really help you, Mrs. Price, except temporarily; no one can; unless you will consent to diet."

Della had scowled with disappointed vexation. It was so unfair. Three weeks back this woman had agreed to perform the miracle unaided; when she had subscribed for her course of treatment there had been no mention of diet; the other then had been sanguine enough; and now the responsibility was to be shifted back to her.

"What do you mean by diet," she had retorted petulantly. "Skip some of my meals?"

"Not that, but omit certain food entirely; all starches and sugars particularly," the other had answered her stiffly in a cold, almost contemptuous voice.

Against the tone as much as the words she had made the wry face of a child.

"What would there be left to eat? I hate meat; and I like salads only for the mayonnaise."

"Ah, you see!"

The contempt was no longer at any pains to hide itself. They were all leagued against her. The whole world was leagued together to sneer at her and patronize her. She felt the dumb rage choke her at the very memory of that tone.

The tone combined with the injustice

of the other's sudden desertion of her had been too much.

"But surely, you guaranteed to reduce me by this pounding and massaging. I thought these hot baths counted for something too. Do you admit that you can't do anything, after all?"

The other had nodded stoically.

"Not a thing, unless you will agree to help me. Each time you come here I can take off a pound or two, but it will always be the same pound. For unless you diet you'll go right out and gain it back again at the next meal."

She had left the woman, too despondent to be any longer resentful. It was the same story everywhere. Diet! And that she couldn't do. She had tried it, and she couldn't. The very smell of food made her so ravenously hungry these days. And she didn't seem to have the strength to resist; she supposed she had become obese, mentally as well as physically.

Moreover, eating was one of the few diversions left her. She couldn't play tennis any more, or swim, or dance, the way she used to. She couldn't enjoy shopping; to go out in the evening to any sort of entertainment had become a veritable effort. After dinner she wanted, generally, nothing so much as to get her corsets off, and to relax. . . . She didn't enjoy reading because it made her bend over. . .

There was actually no pleasure left her. This abominable corpulence had taken them all. It was like a disease. But she only made it worse by fighting it. She might as well give in. Lots of women were fat and they appeared to get along well enough. Probably, once having accepted the condition, one became adjusted to it as to everything else. And she wasn't as fat as some. She glanced down at her bulging hips and abdomen, painfully bound by the stays that tortured her at every breath. And the vision bade fare to be too much for her. She hadn't much fortitude for realism of this kind. . . .

It distressed to the point of overwhelming her and added to her inertia. She might as well acquiesce. She would have, long ago, if it hadn't been for Jim. He kept hectoring her.

"It's such nonsense, Della. Such sheer laziness! Why don't you use a little will-power? That's all it requires. Don't eat so much, and exercise a little; walk now and then. I wish we'd never bought that motor; I'll agree to sell it if you will."

Sell the motor indeed! She was winded if she walked three blocks. And with their apartment situated, as it was, five blocks from the car-line! He was becoming actually cruel with his insistence. Why didn't he let her alone? As at this noon, for instance. His attitude during luncheon had been the third factor contributing to her complete exhaustion.

II

THEY had taken luncheon together at the Blackstone, a place he disliked and she adored. —That may partly have accounted for his ill-nature. For he had done nothing but nag her during the whole meal. While she had given her order he had sat scowling to such a degree that the waiter couldn't have failed to notice, and at the end he hadn't been able to restrain himself.

"Parfait and French pastry! Della, you must be insane! That's so much solid fat for you."

Then as her face had drooped guiltily, "Look at that woman over there. That's what *you* should be eating. She doesn't need to. She's very obviously of that fastidious, delicate type that never get fat. But then, it's always the thin people who diet and the fat ones who gorge."

She had looked, in order to cover the confusion and wretchedness with which his words filled her. The woman was just paying her check. In front of her stood the remnants of a plain lettuce salad and a half tumbler of iced tea. This had evidently constituted her entire luncheon! For an acute instant Della had envied that woman.

"What you have ordered there,"—

her husband had still kept driving at her,—"is enough for three men. You *know* what these rich foods do to you; and yet you won't exert any control. . . It's monstrous! A child would have more restraint. . . . I should think your vanity would help you. You used to be so beautiful, one of the loveliest girls in Chicago! And look at you now. Only twenty-seven, and looking forty, if a day."

"*Used to be* beautiful!" Could it be that he considered she had lost all her beauty?

Again she daubed her eyes. Was every good point cancelled merely because she was too stout? She still had her lovely hair and her fabulous complexion. There weren't many women who could go without paint and powder as she could. She had never needed to *touch* her face, not even the eyebrows. They were naturally arched and very fine; her eye-lashes were heavy; her colour was so exquisitely distributed as to seem artificial; as for a lip-stick, she had never used one in her life. As a young girl, she had always been accused of making up. In those days the imputation had rather pleased her. Now she furiously resented any such suggestion as a disparagement of the only really good feature she still possessed. Her complexion was prettier than most thin women's; than that woman's over there, for example. . . .

She strained her weak eyes for a better look. Her sweet, rather vapid face wore an anxious, almost an evil expression. The woman wasn't phenomenally young, probably not so young as she; about thirty, Della surmised. And she wasn't, in the strict sense, beautiful. But there was that about her, nevertheless, which detained the eyes.

She was, to begin with, excessively slender; one of those freakishly slight modern types. And still not thin. Her contours were as sure as they were subtle. She missed being scrawny by only a hair's-breadth, and it was in the exquisite sheerness of this margin that rested her appeal. It gave her that poignance of frailty which is after all the essential quality of her sex.

She was evidently small-boned; this was seen at a glance from the narrowness of her curved hips, her small wrists and ankles. And accompanying this slightness, a delicate roundness. This last was visible everywhere that the eye carried. Her arms, seen through the thin georgette of her waist, were small and curved, the rise at the elbow being proportioned exactly to the narrow wrist from which it sprang. Her chest was straight but by no means concave; for all its firm white tautness not a bone was visible. Her breasts, also outlined beneath her thin waist, were neither flat nor full, but exquisitely *right*. Her waist was relatively large; a twenty-five inch tape, however, would easily have spanned it; her hips, swelling down from it with rare finesse, appeared scarcely wider; only enough to include that subtle but inescapable curve of her long, tight skirt as it fell from her waist to her ankles; to support it and give it grace. The ankles were, in their slightness, distinctly excessive. But the feet matched them: long, extravagantly narrow, extravagantly arched.

It was only at this point that Della thought of looking at the woman's face. She rose to it—more and more despairingly—from the feet, as it were.

About it there was little to arrest one at the first glance. It wasn't striking, and as to features it was distinctly commonplace. The hair was soft, not too heavy; dull brown; but beautifully done with the same adherence to close firm lines that in general distinguished her. The eyes were large and blue, with heavy lashes and a peering near-sighted look behind which watched, however, some profounder quality that Della couldn't for the moment fathom. The nose was unequivocally bad; heavy, clumsy, not in key with the delicacy of the rest. The mouth was sullen in repose and the heavy rouge which marked it out, marked it as a defect.

At least Della thought so, until she

saw the woman smile. Just a little, but behind the smile gleamed a row of very perfect teeth. In the light of it the whole face flared up into something like salience; the eyes caught the gleam; even the clear, but somewhat unpleasant pallor seemed to quicken; the murkiness gave way to intelligence.

It was in that illumination that Della got the full import of those careless myopic eyes; that pull at the back of them of something steadily feline, something triumphant. The woman was completely cognizant of herself and of her power; she was self-assured and unconcerned behind the neutral factors of her long, plain gown—which after all obscured nothing—and her pallid, mediocre face.

Della felt her chin quivering, her hands clenching and unclenching. At this moment the other walked past her, apologizing in some foreign language. The glance she had given her had been full of good-humour and—oblivion. There had been absent from it even the usual disparagement. Della realized, sharply how—to this woman—she no longer even figured; she was no more than a chair against the wall. . . .

III

She sat on, quivering, after the other had passed out of sight. Through all her numbness of spirit as well as body shot a nerve of pain. *She* had been like that once, arresting, seductive. In the same manner she had been confident and negligent, *too* negligent.

This one would never be too negligent. She was one of those, Della surmised, who could live on lettuce three times a day if necessary, for the sake of the exquisite little body of hers. It was the altar at which she worshipped, the sole altar probably. One deduced this from the conscious tension of her long, slim hands with their decorative, almost too precious, nails; from the manner in which she had been scented.

That pervasive, insidious fragrance had never been the result of a mere drop of perfume hastily applied. It was the kind of ensemble that comes from a thousand sources. From skin bathed in a scented bath with scented soap of the most expensive kind, and afterwards powdered with some very special powder to which it has become inured; from undergarments that have lain for days among sachet; from hair and eyebrows and ears and lips and fingers that have been pointed with the same insistent, slightly malignant perfume. . . . That sophisticated aura of fragrance which had enveloped her was the product of a very elaborate and painstaking technique.

Della had always known that such a technique existed and that some women acquired it and used it. But she had never bothered. She had relied, rather, on natural factors, like a peach-blow complexion and auburn curls. That was how she had been *sold*. Another woman would have felt the fat threatening, seen it even incipiently blunting her contours, smudging and cheapening her, and would have stopped it at whatever heroic cost.

And *she* could still do this. It only meant a little will-power, as her husband had so caustically said. She would go on a diet this very day; she would buy the book, *Eat and Grow Thin*, which her masseuse had recommended. Jim shouldn't have to look from her, wistfully, to the wives of his friends; to the women on the stage; with, afterwards, that weary droop back to her, full of fealty and abhorrence. . . . He should be able to look at her again lovingly, *proudly*. She would make herself over! She would begin to-day, now, by walking home! It was at least seven miles. She shouldn't get there until ten at night very likely. But no matter.

She rose, full of resolution, and got as far as the lobby. There she was arrested by two factors: the sight of tea-drinkers in the tea-room, and the detaining hand of a friend.

"Why, Della? Are you here? How providential! You'll have tea with me, won't you? Dick is to meet me at six,

and it's only just five, isn't it? A whole hour to kill. What, you aren't taking tea? To reduce? Oh, I see. But my dear, *tea* can't make you fat. Plain tea! Well then, at least sit with me while *I* drink some."

And Carrie Norton buckled her arm into Della's and drew her, still protesting, in the direction of the tea-room.

Della sank comfortably back in her chair and let the music wash from her mind the distressing considerations that had, for the last hour, been ruffling her usual calm. She stretched one hand out over the table, automatically reaching for the *carte*.

"You'll change your mind, and have something, won't you?" Carrie urged. "After all, one cup of tea and one cake couldn't make you very fat. And you can always start dieting, you know."

Della still hesitated. She felt suddenly the enormity of what she had set out to do, and her inability to compass it. A great despondency bore down upon her—a despondency which she wanted lifted at any cost. Again she felt those weak, facile tears. There was no use for her to struggle; it was too late; she had let it all go too long; she might as well acquiesce. Besides, those cakes that a waiter was carrying past her on a tray were irresistible.

"I suppose I may as well. I shan't have dinner for another two hours."

"A pot of tea," Carrie ordered, "and French pastry. Is that right, dear?"

"Oh, no. I detest tea, you know. I'd rather have chocolate if you don't mind, and perhaps an ice."

The other nodded somewhat doubtfully. "But, Della, I *would* be a little more careful. Chocolate, you know, is terribly fattening."

There again sounded that note of contempt. Della cynically laughed. "My dear, you know that you don't *really* think it matters. *Look* at me."

The chocolate was deliciously rich and warm. As Della sipped it the anxiety left her face and there returned the old familiar, sweet, and rather vapid expression. She was so comfortable; she asked nothing better than to sit there nibbling at her cake and listening to Carrie's chatter. The other disturbed her by suddenly straining to look at someone to whom Della's back was turned.

"It's Lvova. The *première danseuse* of the Russian ballet. Do turn around, Della. She won't notice you."

It was such an effort to turn round; Della hated to bother; but she managed it just in time to see, entering the room, the woman whom she had studied previously with such interest.

Her friend was gasping her admiration.

"Isn't she charming? But so subdued-looking. Not in the least as she looks on the stage. However, you can't miss that ravishing figure of hers, even in those clothes. Did you ever see a more perfect body?"

"Yes, she's lovely," Della tepidly agreed. "But isn't she horribly thin?"

THE job of a woman in the world is to listen to a man talking about himself. The job of a man is to listen to a woman talking about other women.

THE man who likes cocktails *after* his meals is the same fellow who calls a girl Miss Jones after he has kissed her.

VILLAGE NOCTURNE

By John McClure

BENEATH the grey and silver sky
The sombre, solemn houses lie
Where sleep, in sleep as still as death,
Self-righteous, lustful, godly men,
Defenders of the ancient faith,
The hoary patriarchs, stern in sin,

Stern, concupiscent, prone-to-pray,
Defenders of the Ancient Word,
Snug with their women, grim as they,
Dragons of virtue and the Lord.

No sound, no motion in the gloom—
Is the world holding back its breath
Awaiting the immemorial doom
Fore-shadowed in the ancient faith?

The watcher wonders. His eyes move
From earth to heaven and they see
The huge moon peering from above
In mock solemnity.

EVERY man of forty divides women into two classes; those whom it would be pleasant to kiss, but dangerous, and those with whom it would be neither pleasant nor dangerous.

THE early bird often catches the consequences.

INTOXICATION works miracles—it enables a man to carry on a dialogue with himself.

PORCELAIN AND PINK

(A ONE-ACT PLAY)

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

A room in the downstairs of a summer cottage. High around the wall runs an art frieze of a fisherman with a pile of nets at his feet and a ship on a crimson ocean, a fisherman with a pile of nets at his feet and a ship on a crimson ocean—and so on. In one place on the frieze there is an overlapping—here we have half a fisherman with half a pile of nets at his foot, crowded damply against half a ship on half a crimson ocean. The frieze is not in the plot, but frankly it fascinates me. I could continue indefinitely, but I am distracted by one of the two objects in the room—a blue porcelain bath-tub. It has character, this bath-tub. It is not one of the new racing bodies, but is small with a high tonneau, and looks as if it were going to jump; discouraged probably by the shortness of its legs, it has submitted to its environment and to its coat of sky-blue paint. But it grumpily refuses to allow any patron completely to stretch his legs—which brings us neatly to the second object in the room:

It is a girl—clearly an appendage to the bath-tub, only her head and throat—all beautiful girls have throats instead of necks—and a suggestion of shoulder appearing above the side. For the first ten minutes of the play the audience is engrossed in wondering if she really is playing the game fairly and hasn't any clothes on or whether it is being cheated and she is dressed.

The girl's name is Julie Mavis. From the proud way she sits up in the bath-tub we deduce that she is not very tall and that she carries herself well. When she smiles her upper lip rolls a little and reminds you of an Easter Bunny. She is within whispering distance of twenty years old.

One thing more—above and to the right of the bath-tub is a window. It is narrow and has a wide sill, it lets in much sun-shine, but effectually prevents anyone who looks in from seeing the bath-tub. You begin to suspect the plot?

We open, conventionally enough, with a song but, as the startled gasp of the audience quite drowns out the first half, we will give only the last of it:

JULIE:

(In a light and airy soprano-enthusiastico.)

Then I will dum de dum de dum,
True as the stars above
Will we regret? Tum-tum forget—
So dies my dre-e-eam of love.

(She evidently likes the last line, so she repeats.)

So dies my dre-e-eam of love.

(Some unorganized humming and then another outburst.)

Oh—
Learn to twist around,
Or—
You'll not be missed around;
No—
Nor never kissed around here.
You're an awful spoil-sport:
You won't play,
Even on a shimmy-shakers'
Holiday.

Oh—
Learn to whirl around,
Shake—
A wicked curl around,
Like—
Each little girl around here.
Shiver like a nigger after thirty days in France;
Quiver like a jelly in a shimmy-shakers' dance.
Never skimp!
Learn to limp!
In the
Bluie,
Bluie,
Blun—der—ing Blimp!

(*During the wild applause that follows Julie modestly moves her arms and makes waves on the surface of the water—at least we suppose she does. Then the door on the left opens suddenly and Lois Marvis enters, dressed but carrying garments and towels. Lois is a year older than Julie and is quite her double in face and voice, but in her clothes and expression are the marks of the conservative. Yes, you've guessed it. Mistaken identity is the old, rusty pivot upon which the plot turns.*)

LOIS:

(*Starting.*) Oh, 'scuse me. I didn't know you were here.

JULIE:

Oh, hello. I'm giving a little concert—

LOIS:

(*Interrupting.*) Why didn't you lock the door?

JULIE:

Didn't I?

LOIS:

Of course you didn't. Do you think I just walked through it?

JULIE:

I thought you picked the lock, dearest.

LOIS:

You're *so* careless.

JULIE:

Well, I'm giving a little concert.

LOIS:

(*Severely.*) Grow up!

JULIE:

(*Waving a pink arm around the room.*) The walls reflect the sound, you see. That's why there's something very beautiful about singing in a bathtub. It gives an effect of surpassing loveliness. Can I render you a selection?

LOIS:

I wish you'd hurry out of the tub.

JULIE:

(*Shaking her head thoughtfully.*) Can't be hurried. This is my kingdom at present, Godliness.

LOIS:

Why the mellow name?

JULIE:

Because you're next to Cleanliness. Don't throw anything please!

LOIS:

How long will you be?

JULIE:

(*After some consideration.*) Not less than fifteen nor more than twenty-five minutes.

LOIS:

As a favour to me will you make it ten?

JULIE:

(*Reminiscing.*) Oh, Godliness, do you remember a day in the chill of last January when one Julie, famous for her Easter-rabbit smile, was going out and there was scarcely any hot water and young Julie had just filled the tub

for her own little self when the wicked sister came and did bathe herself therein, forcing the young Julie to perform her ablutions with cold cream—which is expensive and a darn lot of trouble?

LOIS:

(*Impatiently.*) Then you won't hurry?

JULIE:

Why should I?

LOIS:

I've got an appointment.

JULIE:

Here at the house?

LOIS:

None of your business.

(*Julie shrugs the visible tips of her shoulders and stirs the water into ripples.*)

JULIE:

So be it.

LOIS:

Oh, for heaven's sake, yes! I have an appointment here at the house—in a way.

JULIE:

In a way?

LOIS:

He isn't coming in. He's calling for me and we're walking.

JULIE:

(*Raising her eye-brows.*) Oh, the plot clears. It's that literary Mr. Calkins. I thought you promised mother you wouldn't invite him in.

LOIS:

(*Desperately.*) She's so idiotic. She detests him because he's just got a divorce. Of course she's had more experience than I have, but—

JULIE:

(*Wisely.*) Don't let her kid you! Experience is the biggest gold brick in the world. All older people have it for sale.

LOIS:

I like him. We talk literature.

JULIE:

Oh, so that's why I've noticed all these weighty books around the house lately.

LOIS:

He lends them to me.

JULIE:

Well, you've got to play his game. When in Rome do as the Romans would like to do. But I'm through with books. I'm all educated.

LOIS:

You're very inconsistent—last summer you read every day.

JULIE:

If I were consistent I'd still be living on warm milk out of a bottle.

LOIS:

Yes, and probably my bottle. But I don't care; I like Mr. Calkins. You know he's attractive.

JULIE:

I never met him.

LOIS:

Well, will you hurry up?

JULIE:

Yes. (*After a pause.*) I wait till the water gets tepid and then I let in more hot.

LOIS:

(*Sarcastically.*) How interesting!

JULIE:

'Member when we used to play "soapo"?

LOIS:

Yes—at ten years old. I'm really quite surprised that you don't play it still.

JULIE:

I do. I'm going to in a minute.

LOIS:

Silly game.

JULIE:

(*Warmly.*) No, it isn't. It's good for the nerves. I'll bet you've forgotten how to play it.

LOIS:

(*Defiantly.*) No, I haven't. You—you get the tub all full of soapsuds and then you get up on the edge and slide down.

JULIE:

(*Shaking her head scornfully.*) Huh! That's only part of it. You've got to slide down without touching your hands or feet—

LOIS:

(*Impatiently.*) Oh, Lord! What do I care? I wish we'd either stop coming here in the summer or else get a house with two bath-tubs.

JULIE:

You can buy yourself a little tin one, or use the hose.

LOIS:

Oh, shut up!

JULIE:

(*Irrelevantly.*) Leave the towel.

LOIS:

What?

JULIE:

Leave the towel when you go.

LOIS:

This towel?

JULIE:

(*Sweetly.*) Yes, I forgot my towel.

LOIS:

(*Looking around for the first time.*) Why, you idiot! You haven't even a kimona.

JULIE:

(*Also looking around.*) Why, so I haven't.

LOIS:

(*Suspicion growing on her.*) How did you get here?

JULIE:

(*Laughing.*) I guess I—I guess I whisked here. You know—a white form whisking down the stairs and—

LOIS:

(*Scandalized.*) Why you little wretch. Haven't you any pride or self-respect?

JULIE:

Lots of both. I think that proves it. I looked very well. I really am rather cute without all my spangles on.

LOIS:

Well, you—

JULIE:

(*Thinking aloud.*) I wish people didn't wear any clothes. I guess I ought to have been a pagan or a native or something.

LOIS:

You're a—

JULIE:

I dreamt last night that one Sunday in church a small boy brought in a magnet that attracted cloth. He attracted the clothes right off of everybody; put them in an awful state; people were crying and shrieking and carrying on as if they'd just discovered their skins for the first time. Only *I* didn't care. So I just laughed. I had

to pass the collection plate because nobody else would.

LOIS:

(*Who has turned a deaf ear to this speech.*) Do you mean to tell me that if I hadn't come you'd have run back to your room—un—unclothed?

JULIE:

Au naturel is so much nicer.

LOIS:

Suppose there had been someone in the living-room.

JULIE:

There never has been yet.

LOIS:

Yet! Good grief! How long—

JULIE:

Besides, I usually have a towel.

LOIS:

(*Completely overcome.*) Golly! You ought to be spanked. I hope you get caught. I hope there's a dozen ministers in the living-room when you come out—and their wives and their daughters.

JULIE:

There wouldn't be room for them in the living-room.

LOIS:

All right. You've made your own —bath-tub; you can lie in it.

(*Lois starts determinedly for the door.*)

JULIE:

(*In alarm.*) Hey! Hey! I don't care about the k'mona but I want the towel. I can't dry myself on a piece of soap and a wet wash-rag.

LOIS:

(*Obstinately.*) I won't humour such a creature. You'll have to dry yourself the best way you can. You can roll on the floor like the animals do that don't wear any clothes.

JULIE:

(*Complacent again.*) All right. Get out!

LOIS:

(*Haughtily.*) Huh!

(*Julie turns on the cold water and with her finger directs a parabolic stream at Lois. Lois retires quickly, slamming the door after her. Julie laughs and turns off the water.*)

JULIE:

(*Singing.*)

When the Arrow-collar man
Meets the D'jer-kiss girl
On the smokeless Sante Fe
Her Pebeco smile
Her Lucille style
De dum da-de-dum one day—

(*She changes to a whistle and leans forward to turn on the taps, but is startled by three loud banging noises in the pipes. Silence for a moment—then she puts her mouth down near the spigot as if it were a telephone.*)

JULIE:

Hello! (*No answer.*) Are you a plumber? (*No answer.*) Are you the water department? (*One loud hollow bang.*) What do you want? (*No answer.*) I believe you're a ghost. Are you? (*No answer.*) Well, then, stop banging. (*She reaches out and turns on the warm tap. No water flows. She turns on the cold tap. No water flows. Again she puts her mouth down close to the spigot.*) If you're the plumber that's a mean trick. Turn it on for a fellow. (*Two loud hollow bangs.*) Don't argue! I want water—water! *Water!*

(*A young man's head appears in the window—a head decorated with a slim moustache and sympathetic eyes. These last stare, and though they can see nothing but many fishermen with nets*

and much crimson ocean, they decide him to speak.)

THE YOUNG MAN:

Some one fainted?

JULIE:

(*Starting up, all ears immediately.*) Jumping cats!

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Helpfully.*) Water's no good for fits.

JULIE:

Fits! Who said anything about fits!

THE YOUNG MAN:

You said something about a cat jumping.

JULIE:

(*Decidedly.*) I did not!

THE YOUNG MAN:

Well, we can talk it over later. Are you ready to go out? Or do you still feel that if you go with me just now everybody will gossip?

JULIE:

(*Smiling.*) Gossip! Would they? It'd be more than gossip—it'd be a regular scandal.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Here, you're going it a little strong. Your family might be somewhat disgruntled—but to the pure all things are suggestive. No one else would even give it a thought, except a few old women. Come on.

JULIE:

You don't know what you ask.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Do you imagine we'd have a crowd following us?

JULIE:

A crowd? There'd be a special, all-steel, buffet trains leaving New York hourly.

THE YOUNG MAN:

You do love nonsense. So did I once. I married some of it. Say, are you house-cleaning?

JULIE:

Why?

THE YOUNG MAN:

I see all the pictures are off the walls.

JULIE:

Why, we never have pictures in this room.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Odd. I never heard of a room without pictures or tapestry or panelling or something.

JULIE:

There's not even any furniture in here.

THE YOUNG MAN:

What a strange house!

JULIE:

It depends on the angle you see it from.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Sentimentally.*) It's *so* nice talking to you like this—when you're merely a voice. I'm rather glad I can't see you.

JULIE:

(*Gratefully.*) So am I.

THE YOUNG MAN:

What colour are you wearing?

JULIE:

(*After a critical survey of her shoulders.*) Why, I guess it's a sort of pinkish white.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Is it becoming to you?

JULIE:

Very. It's—its old. I've had it for a long while.

THE YOUNG MAN:

I thought you hated old clothes.

JULIE:

I do—but this was a birthday present and I sort of have to wear it.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Pinkish white. Well, I'll bet it's devine. Is it in style?

JULIE:

Quite. It's very simple, standard model.

THE YOUNG MAN:

What a voice you have! How it echoes! Sometimes I shut my eyes and seem to see you in a far desert island calling for me. And I plunge toward you through the surf, hearing you call as you stand there, water stretching on both sides of you—

(*The soap slips from the side of the tub and splashes in. The young man blinks.*)

THE YOUNG MAN:

What was that? Did I dream it?

JULIE:

Yes. You're—you're very poetic, aren't you.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Dreamily.*) No. I do prose. I do verse only when I am stirred.

JULIE:

(*Murmuring.*) Stirred by a spoon—

THE YOUNG MAN:

I have always loved poetry. I can remember to this day the first poem I ever learned by heart. It was "Evangeline."

JULIE:

That's a fib.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Did I say "Evangeline?" I meant "The Skeleton in Armour."

JULIE:

I'm a low-brow. But I can remember my first poem. It had one verse:

Parker and Davis
Sittin' on a fence
Tryne to make a dollar
Outa fif-teen cents.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Eagerly.*) Are you growing fond of literature?

JULIE:

If it's not too ancient or complicated or depressing. Same way with people. I usually like 'em if they're not too ancient or complicated or depressing.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Of course I've read enormously. You told me last night that you were very fond of Walter Scott.

JULIE:

(*Considering.*) Scott? Let's see. Yes, I've read "Ivanhoe" and "The Last of the Mohicans."

THE YOUNG MAN:

That's by Cooper.

JULIE:

(*Angrily.*) "Ivanhoe" is? You're crazy! I guess I know. I read it.

THE YOUNG MAN:

"The Last of the Mohicans" is by Cooper.

JULIE:

What do I care! I like O. Henry. I don't see how he ever wrote those stories. Most of them he wrote in prison. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" he made up in prison.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Biting his lip.*) Literature—literature—literature! How much it has meant to me!

JULIE:

Well, as Gaby Deslys said to Mr. Bergson, with my looks and your brains there's nothing we couldn't do.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Laughing.*) You certainly are hard to keep up with. One day you're awfully pleasant and the next you're in a mood. If I didn't understand your temperament so well—

JULIE:

(*Impatiently.*) Oh, you're one of these amateur character readers, are you? Size people up in five minutes and then look wise whenever they're mentioned. I hate that sort of thing.

THE YOUNG MAN:

I don't boast of sizing you up. You're most mysterious, I'll admit.

JULIE:

Rot! There's only three mysterious people in history.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Who are they?

JULIE:

The man with the Iron Mask, Dr. Frank Crane and the fella who says "ug uh-glug uh-glug uh-glug" when the line is busy.

THE YOUNG MAN:

You *are* mysterious. I love you. You're beautiful, intelligent and virtuous and that's the rarest known combination.

JULIE:

You're a historian. Tell me if there are any bath-tubs in history. I think they've been frightfully neglected.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Bath-tubs! Let's see. Well, Agamemnon was stabbed in his bath-tub. And Charlotte Corday stabbed Marat in his bath-tub.

JULIE:

(*Sighing.*) Way back there! Nothing new besides the sun, is there? Why only yesterday I picked up a musical-comedy score that must have been at least twenty years old; and there on the cover it said "The Shimmies of Normandy," but shimmie was spelt the old way, with a "C."

THE YOUNG MAN:

I loathe these modern dances. Oh, Lois, I wish I could see you. Come to the window.

(*There is a loud bang in the water-pipe and suddenly the flow starts from the open taps. Julie turns them off quickly.*)

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Puzzled.*) What on earth was that?

JULIE:

(*Ingeniously.*) I heard something, too.

THE YOUNG MAN:

Sounded like running water.

JULIE:

Didn't it? Strange like it. As a matter of fact I was filling the gold-fish bowl.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Still puzzled.*) What was that banging noise?

JULIE:

One of the fish snapping his golden jaws.

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*With sudden resolution.*) Lois, I love you. I am not a mundane man but I am a forger—

JULIE:

(*Interested at once.*) Oh, how fascinating.

THE YOUNG MAN:

—a forger ahead. Lois, I want you.

JULIE:

(*Sceptically.*) Huh! What you really want is for the world to come to attention and stand there till you give "Rest!"

THE YOUNG MAN:

Lois I— Lois I—

(*He stops as Lois suddenly opens the door, comes in and bangs it behind her. She looks peevishly at Julie and then suddenly catches sight of the young man in the window.*)

LOIS:

(*In horror.*) Mr. Calkins!

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*Surprised.*) Why I thought you said you were wearing pinkish white!

(*After one despairing stare Lois shrieks, throws up her hands in surrender and sinks to the floor.*)

THE YOUNG MAN:

(*In great alarm.*) Good Lord! She's fainted! I'll be right in.

(*Julie's eyes light on the towel which has slipped from Lois's inert hand.*)

JULIE:

In that case I'll be right out.

(*She puts her hands on the side of the tub to lift herself out and a murmur, half gasp, half sigh, ripples from the audience.*

A Belasco midnight comes quickly down and blots out the stage.)

CURTAIN.

TAKE MY LOVE

By Arthur Edison

TAKE my love and make of it
What upon your heart is writ.

Shape it in your lovely way;
Mould it to the tunes of day:

To the rustling of the rushes;
To the piping of the thrushes;

To the chirping of the crickets
In the tangled, reedy thickets;

To the droning of the bees—
Shape, oh shape my love to these.

But to guard it 'gainst the morrow
Salt it well with tears of sorrow

Lest the pain of parting be
Fiercer than my love for thee!

TREASURE

By Hortense Flexner

THE little pilfering hands of hours and days,
Bury much loveliness and treasured gold,
Savour and essence, cloud and warm scent and haze,
Small things accustomed, all too frail to hold.
But I would have remembrance full and keen,
Nor yield one leaf or stone, one shadow's blue,
One little thrusting wind, one hill's tall green;
The outer ways of wonder that we knew.

The fear grows with me that I shall forget—
Never your love, but half seen things of grace,
Beauty we freely took and marvelling, set
Away, too blindly, knowing not its place;
This wealth put by, this gold too faint and rare,
I cannot count and yet I cannot spare.

A STORM AT SORRENTO

By Aloysius Coll

THE storm, a coppery giantess,
Boiled up behind the sea
And clutching at the wind and wave,
Came thundering in to me!

Her hair a mop of knotted clouds
All tangled in the skies;
Like bloody smoke she flung the dark
Red fury of her eyes!

She shook the frantic trees on shore,
Like some far-reaching hag,
Beat back the sun with watery hands,
And wrestled with the crag!

* * * * *

The sunlight now! And not a scar
To show what demon hand
This scimitar of curving foam
Flung out across the sand!

THE PERFUME COUNTER

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

TO the post-man, the grocers' clerks, neighbours, and others necessarily aware of her existence, Meta Burkner was a pretty, quiet, pleasant girl—"one of the Burkners." And the Burkners were respectable, decent enough, "one of the families at 930 Ellison Street." Ellison Street, in New York's upper East Side, was a small canyon of unnoticeable, fire-escaped apartment houses, "walk-ups" as distinguished from the more costly and stylish "elevator apartments" of choicer neighbourhoods and but a step removed from the less sanitary and more maligned tenements.

Meta knew that she did not fit well into her neighbourhood. She was not especially proud of the knowledge nor of her difference. It made her too much apart, with no corresponding rewards. Her subtleties of feelings and emotions, if recognized, would have met with sneers and sarcasm instead of sympathy.

When she was six, Meta noticed for the first time that there must be something about her that wasn't like other children. A Mrs. Fellman, a bustling, black-clad neighbour, came into the Burkner apartment for a chat about homely affairs.

She drew Meta toward her in a spirit of friendliness, with a comfortable "how's the little girl to-day?" Meta howled. With doubled fists she fought her way to freedom. All remarks about "go to the nice lady" and "is that the way you treat Mrs. Fellman when she comes to see us?" met with a wail of defiance. Meta, in one corner, finger in mouth, glared at the intruder and would not allow herself to be petted.

After the neighbour had gone, Mrs. Burkner turned to her recalcitrant daughter.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked. "Why did you act so bad when Mrs. Fellman wanted you should sit in her lap?"

"Fish," said Meta from her corner.

"Fish? What do you mean?"

"She had 'em on her. I smelled 'em."

"Nonsense, she didn't have any fish. How can you talk like that?"

Meta would give no further information. And Mrs. Burkner, remembering the temperament of her own youth, that, persisting in spite of poverty, had caused her to name her oldest child Millicent and her youngest Meta, instead of the more usual Annie or Mary, put it down as Meta's "disposition." But it came to Meta, then, that other people didn't notice, or at least didn't mind, smells the way she did. And that, anyhow, smells weren't things folks would talk about with you.

Jim, who was two years older, brought home, a few months later, the next bit of evidence against her.

Meta's getting funny at school—the Murphy boy told me. He heard Miss Longan say so. She wouldn't sit in back of Tommy Rollins and cried because she was next to Mary Baillie's little sister."

"Not nice. Onions," volunteered Meta.

She didn't see why a dislike of onions on the clothing of her associates should

mark her out. How could other people stand them? How could others sniff inquiringly at escaping sewer gas or yesterday's cat and then stay to investigate more closely? But other people did. Meta could only look at them and wonder.

As Meta grew older, she became more aware of her peculiarity. She found it was something to be ashamed of, to exercise in secret. If you express even the faintest dislike of an odour others will laugh at you, she found. If you show the semblance of joy at a fragrance, the laughter will turn into derision.

To be sure, Mrs. Fellman and her neighbour successors, who persisted in wearing unwashed black in summer and carrying home the family supplies, learned that Meta was a bad little girl who would scratch if you tried to be friendly. They put that down as bad temper, a familiar enough trait in Ellison Street. Boys and girls learned that Meta Burkner, after a funny little sniff, would, at times, leave them strangely alone.

But, after varied fights, vocal and fistic, Meta learned to control her emotions, outwardly at least. She could meet half a dozen unpleasant smells, in the course of a day, and only a slight shudder, an almost imperceptible cringing, would betray her. And, though gradually her sense of smell grew more keen and more important to her, one could scarcely notice, from the way she acted when she came in contact with them, that Meta was interested in odours at all.

Even Meta's family, who for a long time had treated her with suspicion, finally got over the idea that she was a "queer one" and gave her the respect that a family always gives its prettiest member.

II

For Meta was pretty. Even the neighbours, slightly puzzled over the "something funny about her," admitted that. When she was seventeen she was slender, with the sort of swaying, fragile quality that is as often the result of poor housing and incorrect food as of generations of good breeding. Her complexion, inclined to paleness, was very smooth, of a peculiar satiny smoothness that even cheap face-powder and liberal rouge could not hide. Her hair was a light, colourless brown and her eyes hazel, but her lashes and brows were well shaped and darker than her hair. Her nose was slender, slightly upturned, with small, rather rounded nostrils. Her mouth was freshly red.

Meta, outwardly normal and quiet and a bit shy, was in most ways a typical product of her neighbourhood. She spent her evenings chatting on the street with boys and girls of her own age, going to moving picture shows, eating innumerable brilliantly coloured sodas and sundaes of which she knew dozens of varieties by name. She wore clothes of slingly material, cut in what she considered smart lines, extreme, showy—and she wore them rather well, with a swagger of her slender body.

Meta stopped school, at fifteen, after one year at "High." She could have kept on going had she cared to, for her father, brother, and sister were working, but she didn't like to study. The preparation of lessons, the little rules, annoyed her. After she stopped, she helped her mother a little around the house—the long, cave-like section of 930, Ellison Street that belonged temporarily to them—a front living room, which one member of the family used as a bedroom, the long dark hall, always half illumined with a swaying gas jet, the little bedrooms, one of which Meta shared with Millie, the court-lift dining-room, the grey kitchen.

Meta hated the apartment. She hated housework because she disliked routine, disliked doing tiresome things—but mostly because of the smells accompanying it; bed clothes to be changed, worn underthings to be assorted and washed, an always musty hallway to be swept, men's clothes, reeking of cheap tobacco and food, to be hung up, work in a kitchen full of a steamy thickness,

a boiling pot, the frying of steak and onions. But Meta did housework because she had no ambition to do anything else. She'd hurry through it, half anæsthetizing herself until she could finish, so that she could dress up and run out into the open air.

The air of the neighbourhood was nearly as bad, odours of a thousand households mingling, but, when it was cold, she didn't mind it so much and, when it was warm, she'd walk over to a little neighbourhood park or to the East River, where even the eternally fishy smell of the ocean seemed better.

Meta's sense of smell was not the usual animal sense that marks people. It was more than that. Life had pushed Meta into a place of unpleasant odours and she didn't know what to do about it. For life drifted to her quite as much through her nostrils as through her eyes and ears.

Not all things, of course, nor all of the usual things she came in contact with, were unpleasant to her. She was no judge of odours. Authorities would have laughed at her. She loved flowers but not all of them. For a change, she liked to sniff in a florist's shop. It seemed, wonderful, to transport her to a pleasanter existence. But, after a few minutes she grew tired of it; the cool pungency became too heavy. And white roses were as unpleasant to her as an unaired bedroom or boiling molasses. She loved some pine trees she had smelled on a day's outing up the Hudson. She loved the smell of new puppies, of new earth, of wet paint, of wet leather, of freshly ironed, warm linen and of some things in her mother's kitchen—certain kinds of coffee, raspberry jelly, occasionally, roasting meats. She hated people who needed bathing, shut-up rooms, the dozens of street smells that go with poverty and cheap living.

She passed an Italian pastry shop, once, and smelled, along with the other pleasant odours, something wonderful, magnificent. Loitering in the doorway, she asked what it was. The old woman in charge of the shop invited her into the back room, a kitchen, and said that they were making salted almonds, frying the almonds in olive oil. Meta inhaled, her eyes half closed. She felt as if someone had given her a present. Yet, usually, Meta pretended that odours meant nothing to her—that she was like all of the other girls and boys she knew.

III

META "went with" Billy Leary. She had started going with him the year before, when she was sixteen. He lived only a few blocks from her home and was always a ready escort. Billy was twenty-one and had a position as packer in a wholesale clothing-house. He thought they ought to get married and settle down—he'd already saved enough money to furnish a flat.

Meta was willing to marry Billy. She was really fond of him, in love, in fact. He was better looking than most of the boys she knew, a ruddy-faced, short, stocky fellow, with a good-natured smile. She was quite pleased with him even if he did not fit into the ideals of a hero which the printed page had given her—Meta's reading was confined to the *Journal* at night, the *American* in the morning and magazines slightly more fictional by the same publisher. Meta didn't expect that.

She was satisfied, usually, with Billy. She liked him well enough to snuggle up close to him, at the movies, to touch, unbidden, his rather fat, ruddy hand. She felt delightful little thrills when he kissed her good-night, in the dark hallway, when he brought her home. Yes, she loved Billy, was quite willing to marry him—yet, she put him off, when he proposed immediate marriage—she was too young—an unusual excuse in her neighbourhood.

It was smells, of course. She thought of it as her own queerness, but the queerness was there all the time, underneath the pretended indifference, as definite as when she was six and far

more developed. And Billy, when he kissed her, brushed her cheek with his coat sleeve, which was musty with the mustiness of poor ventilation and dampness and lack of cleaning. And Billy's hair smelled sometimes of cheap hair tonics, sometimes of the barber's unpleasant lotions. . . . Billy smoked cheap cigarettes and cigars made from the clippings of rank tobacco and the odours of them formed an unpleasant aura around him. Of course, she could get used to it—it was no worse than she was accustomed to—her own family, her father, her brother. She shuddered.

Meta tried, even, to get Billy to see how she felt about things. He'd be pleasant, laughing, companionable, until she mentioned a scent or an odour. Then he'd look at her peculiarly and change the subject, or, pinching her arm, gently say, "You're a funny one!"

She found that the best way was to ignore all smells when she could, to pretend that this one sense did not exist at all.

She wondered if anyone else felt as she did. She groped about, sometimes, when she met new people, trying to find one, anyone—but people were not interested in odours.

IV

MILLIE, christened Millicent, Meta's sister, married when Meta was eighteen. She married Fred Davis and started housekeeping and Meta had the bedroom all to herself. But she had less money, as had all of the family. Millie had been working as a saleswoman of coats and suits in a speciality shop in Thirty-fourth Street and brought home rather good wages. She had contributed to the up-keep of the home and had paid for most of Meta's clothes. Now, with Millie married, this income ceased and it was decided that Meta must find a position down-town.

The shop where Millie had been employed did not take inexperienced girls, except as cash girls, a position Meta felt was far below her. She didn't care much about selling suits, anyhow. It took too much flattery and cleverness to make a sale. Most positions were closed to Meta, for she didn't want to spend a year or two in training and she had no ambition. So she applied for a position at one of the larger department stores, a store of the "better sort," whose chatty advertisements always seemed particularly "classy" to her. After some questioning she was finally accepted and put to selling ribbons.

Meta didn't like the ribbon counter but she was too indolent to ask for a change. So she stood there all day, chatting to the girl next to her or measuring ribbons, blue, green, orange, endless layers, with a bored indifference. After all, in a year or two she'd probably marry Billy—he kept worrying her about it, didn't like to have her work down-town.

The perfume counter was thrust upon Meta. She had thought of it, vaguely, as all clean glass and delicate colours, a pleasant place at which to linger, to inhale deeply of its stores, but her sense of smell had been so long something to thrust back, to make little of, that it never occurred to her that she might work where things always smelled pleasantly. There was a sale, now, so Meta and two other girls were transferred from the less busy counters.

Meta spent her first day very happily at the perfume counter sniffing at delightful odours. She did not differentiate very closely between them. They were nearly all lovely, fine smells. She'd lift the glass stopper of a huge bottle of toilet water—and smell; lift the cover of a box of sachet—and smell. Life suddenly became something very lovely indeed.

On the way home it occurred to Meta for the first time that there were people who spent all of their days among delightful odours, who even acknowledged to other people that they liked pleasant smells, who developed, without shame, this sense that she had been almost afraid to acknowledge. She ate dinner in half a dream, hardly

realizing what she ate. She went to the movies with Billy and forgot, minutes at a time, to watch the pictures. It was as if the world suddenly had changed for her, as if she were on the eve of a great event. And yet she knew that she had known all the time about the perfume counter. She didn't try to understand it.

Meta stayed at the perfume counter for a week, selling cheap extract and sachets and toilet waters. She enjoyed them a great deal, made comparisons between them, sprinkled drops of them on her handkerchief or the front of her blouse. She forgot to be bored or indifferent.

She noticed the other girls at the perfume counter. They seemed peculiarly clean and wholesome—they had "class," Meta admitted to herself. Perhaps it was because they smelled such pleasant things all day. Yet, she knew that the girls took the perfume and the sachet as a matter of course. They would discuss smells with far more freedom than her family. They didn't think it odd that she should have decided fondness for certain scents. They appreciated, in a way, her love of fragrance, but, to them, it was all "part of the day's work," more pleasant than the lace counter, less tiresome than the notions.

When Meta was put back to selling ribbons again, she felt as if something had gone out, as if, in a way, she was blinded.

She knew she couldn't go on at the ribbon counter much longer. She asked for a transfer, finally, to the perfumes, with a curious trembling.

It seemed impossible that anyone could bestow so great a gift carelessly. Yet, because she was pretty—they try to get attractive, fresh-looking girls at the counters which display perfumes, cosmetics and candy—her request was granted freely enough.

V

After the first week or two of ecstasy, Meta settled down more calmly about her new work. Her life became divided even more markedly between the store and her outside activity. Before this, she had waited eagerly for the store to close, glancing frequently at the store clock or at her cheap wrist watch, always ten minutes too fast. Now, she was not so eager. She hated the routine of the shop, the long hours, the ceaseless waiting on trade, but now business hours brought pleasant smells; home brought only the foulness and the mustiness of cheap living.

At first, all of the odours but white rose seemed pleasant enough to Meta, a wonderful bouquet. The popular perfumes appealed to her, especially, when she first came to the counter. They were the ones she had always been used to, the ones her friends bought. She had never thought of questioning their excellence.

After a few weeks, she found that the cheapest extracts began to be as distasteful to her as unaired rooms had always been. They became strong, almost coarse. She noticed that they were purchased mostly by shop girls and factory girls and married women of small means who wore cheap lace waists and hats trimmed in bobbing "feather fancies." So Meta carefully avoided Jockey Club and the poorer grades of lotus flower and lilac when she smelled perfumes. Some makes of violet became definitely distasteful to her. Soon she could tell by looking at a customer if she would order heliotrope or sweet pea or white rose.

Then, gradually, the perfumes a bit higher in price, especially those of Oriental tendency that a few months before had seemed fine and rich, became offensively heavy. Their bouquet suggested cheap rouge, stiffly marcelled hair, bad corsetting, dark clothes usually in need of cleaning.

Meta's taste in other things changed a little, too. Because she noticed that it was the much-rouged girl with the frizzed hair who bought lilac and Jockey Club and Jassamine, and the cheaply jewelled woman with hard lines and circles under her eyes and overtrimmed hats who used Oriental

scents, sandalwood or wistaria, Meta's hair became glossier and smoother, and omitted numerous plated pins and chains that she had thought added a pretty touch to her costume.

She started taking great care of her room now, getting it as well ventilated as she could and using more clean linen than the family thought necessary. She washed out her waists at night, so as to have them fresh and clean, bathed more than she dared confess to any of her friends and took care of her nails and hair.

She spent her evenings much as she had always: the movies, walks, dances, "the crowd." She saw, although she didn't like to see, that all of the girls she went with used just the perfumes that were becoming so distasteful to her. The men reeked, as always, of cheap domestic tobacco, of hair lotions. Yet—she loved Billy. He was a dear, the way his hair grew on his forehead, his friendly nose and mouth, his smile, his kindly eyes. Life with Billy would be pleasant—Billy would always make a good living—he was a dear boy, so gentle and sweet and thoughtful about things, constantly trying to please her. She could marry Billy—marry and settle down and have a little home—and accept the smells of the neighbourhood, of cheap cooking—and the burning fats that accompanied it.

Meta didn't have time to think of Billy during the day. Her home, Billy, "the crowd," all disappeared behind an aromatic barricade.

Now, Meta preferred the better class of domestic perfumes. She could afford small bottles of them and used them at home, sprinkled sparingly, a "decoration" for her plain little room. She liked Melba for a while, especially "Love Me," but grew tired of it, and then of Mary Garden, and went to Colgate. The name of Colgate at one time stood for supremacy in perfume to Meta. She tried the varieties, one at a time, liked them for a little while, and then proceeded to others. Hudnut's perfumes then seemed to her to be a little more fragrant, a bit more subtle. But she grew tired of these, too, and liked, for a few weeks, Corylopsis, deserting it only when it grew too much like the Oriental odours which she had long before found disagreeable to her.

Then Meta moved up the counter a little way to the more expensive perfumes. She waited a little less readily on the woman who came in to buy lily of the valley and sweet pea. For, now, Meta was beginning to like the better class of "popular" scents. They were the perfumes purchased by the well-to-do people, people who lived in far better surroundings than Meta, not rich, but who went to the matinée on Wednesdays and Saturdays and who did nothing very useful the rest of the time. They represented an affluence that Meta's family had never attained.

Meta wondered, now, how she had ever liked cheaper perfumes. She was getting fourteen dollars a week, but could easily afford the scents she liked, if she used them carefully. She found Roger and Gallet delicious, especially the violet which, in cheaper perfumes, had seemed a parody on the real flower. When she grew tired of this she used Kerkoff's Djer-Kiss, which seemed lighter, but when it lost its allure she switched to Piver and used, in turn, Flora May, Azurea and Pompeia. She felt quite proud because she liked "imported perfumes" and looked down on those made in her own country.

Then she found Ambre Royal and was proud to pronounce the maker's name, quite distinctly ve-o-lay, though spelled, innocently, Violet. She liked knowing that. She liked the perfume, too, not because it cost three dollars an ounce, without the war tax, but because it seemed deeper and more exquisite than others she had known.

But Meta grew tired of Ambre Royal in a little while. These scents, even though imported, were after all still "popular." There were other perfumes that were far more expensive,

but the particular store for which Meta worked carried these other perfumes only in small sealed bottles, instead of in bulk as they carried the less expensive ones. So Meta did not have the opportunity of applying them during business hours.

VI

At first, the better perfumes had not seemed especially fragrant to Meta. Only their cost had attracted her. Now, coming upon them again in her sales she found a beauty to them she had never experienced, something that tugged at her feelings, as lovely colours might have done. She bought a small bottle of Dorsy's Chevalier one day, and for weeks life seemed pleasanter.

She would hurry home, eat dinner as fast as she could, help with the dishes in a sort of a quick rage, refuse to go to the movies with Billy, and, alone in her room, undress, climb on the uneven little bed with a magazine and her perfume. She'd pour drops of the perfume on her gown, her forehead, her hair, on her hands, and inhale deeply. The ugly things, the smells of grease from the kitchen, the stale smells of the street, seemed almost to fade away. She bought Morny's Chaminade then, and later smelled alternately at the two nearly empty bottles trying to decide which she liked the better. But she bought somebody's Rose Bonbon and didn't like it at all and almost wept at the waste of money—she needed so many other things more.

She liked Grenoville's Bluet, but had never dared buy it. After all, perfume at eight dollars an ounce, when you are only getting fourteen for a whole week's work, is rather high. But she wanted it a great deal. Perfume meant infinitely more than gloves or shoes, things like that. She bought an ounce of it, finally, and, when it was gone, her plain room seemed strangely empty. She bought an ounce bottle of Houbigant's Ideal, then—she had long ago discarded Duval's Fleurs because it smelled too much of white rose. She enjoyed the Ideal vastly.

Then, quite as suddenly as she had been put at the perfume counter, Meta discovered Coty's Ambre Antique. She had known of Coty's perfumes before and had liked L'Origan and Styx, but the store had been out of Ambre Antique. When a shipment arrived Meta seized a bottle of it as if she had known about it and hungered for it for a long time. It seemed to answer some definite need, to sooth her as no scent had ever done. It seemed to blot out all of the ugly things that home meant, escaping gas, cheap food, damp clothing. She smelled of a bottle of it all day when she could—you can get quite a lot of scent from a sealed bottle of perfume, after you are trained to it—you shake the bottle thoroughly, so that the perfume goes well up to the ground glass stopper, and smell.

Ambre Antique was, to Meta, the final perfume. It was not the cost of it, though it happened to be one of the most expensive perfumes that was being brought to America just then. It was not as expensive as some of the "personal" perfumes, concocted by queer young chemists to suit certain definite personalities, but which, to Meta, seemed crude and amateurish. Ambre Antique had a cool depth, an illusive quality that seemed to grow more lovely all of the time.

Meta waited several weeks before buying it. She could so little afford it. Then it seemed as if nothing else mattered but smells, that she must have some of it at home. When she finally bought an ounce, golden in its square-cornered bottle in its plain tan box, and opened it in her small, ugly room, she forgot the cabbages and onions of the neighbourhood more completely than she had ever forgotten them before and was very happy.

Meta was quite shabbily dressed.

Buying perfumes and "helping at home" did not allow a great deal for clothes. Besides, Meta had reached the point where she hated cheap clothes; they were related too closely to cheap odours. Even the middle grades, decent things of a year ago that had seemed so fine to her, now were definitely placed—nice enough in their way, but not her kind at all. Her people—the people who bought Ambre Antique, there was something different about them—some of them were actresses and bought it because it was expensive; they didn't count, really—but there were others, in correct, rather rough morning things for shopping or soft, swishy afternoon clothes—they bought Ambre Antique because they loved it—she could see how they caressed the bottle when she handed it to them—they were her people. They spoke in carefully cultivated, and, to Meta, slightly affected accents. They disregarded her entirely, didn't know she was alive nor that she, too, loved Ambre Antique. Yet Meta felt that she was one of them. What did clothes matter?

Scents, to Meta, became more and more of an obsession. She grew to judge people almost through the sense of smell. She was quite as much a slave to perfume as if it were opium or alcohol. In the subway, going to work in the morning, she would move, constantly, so as not to be too near people too carelessly washed. Their presence was a real torture to her. She waited for half an hour in the evening in order to get a seat on top of a bus where even the smell of gasoline was far preferable to the smell of the subway. Her people—Ambre Antique people—rode in limousines, she knew that. Yet, the top of the bus was all right—things aren't so bad in the open air.

Then Meta found out that she needed new shoes, actually must have them and that her plain little suit was so shabby that she couldn't wear it to business much longer.

Her mother, who, a few years before, had scolded her for "putting every cent on her back" and who now, definitely, decided that she was "a queer one, not like other girls," commanded that she get a suit at once. It could be charged and paid for in a month or two. Even Billy, who in spite of Meta's frequent refusals of his invitations, was still faithful and devoted, looked questionably at Meta's clothes. It never occurred to him how Meta spent her money or that he might ask about it, but he wanted her to look nice—like other girls.

So Meta bought a suit, a rather rough-finished tweed Norfolk in dark grey and a velour hat that pulled down over her hair, and new shoes. She felt satisfied with her new clothes—they weren't what her mother wanted her to get—but she might be anyone at all, just out of a limousine, shopping for Ambre Antique.

VII

But—there was no money for Ambre Antique. For a week or two Meta pretended not to mind. She spent the evenings with Billy or with the crowd, coming home late, and tried to go right to sleep. Some nights she couldn't fall asleep easily. She'd smell the empty bottle, over which a fragrance still lingered. She'd take out a whole pile of empty bottles—that had held various kinds of perfume—from one of her dresser drawers and smelled at them in turn, comparing them, enjoying each of them, but always coming back to Ambre Antique. And, as the bottle, which had held her favourite scent retained less and less of its former odour, Meta grew more and more fond of it. The fondness became a definite, gnawing hunger. She suffered almost physical pain because her room no longer held the fragrance. She clenched her fists in an agony of wanting it.

One day Meta was alone for a few

minutes at the counter. She had come back early from her lunch hour; it was spring and the city streets and the cheap lunch places were more distasteful than the store. She fingered the little bottles of Ambre Antique, fingered them caressingly, hungrily. In a minute, then, she had slipped one of the bottles into her purse. When she snapped her purse closed she did not feel the guilt she knew she ought to have felt, just a sort of glad surge of relief.

Of course, sometimes, they search your purse at night when you leave the store—it was a little bottle, she'd take a chance.

She thought, then, of transferring the perfume to a cheaper bottle, but there was always the risk of spilling some, of the bottle retaining some bit of the perfume it had held before and ruining the pure fragrance of the perfume she loved.

She reached home safely with the bottle and spent the evening transported to a realm of happiness which seemed to soothe her and lift her out of the little troubles of the day. She should have been sorry—she knew that—why, she'd stolen the perfume—was a thief, taking something that didn't belong to her. Yet, there was only a dull thankfulness that she had not been found out—and that she had the perfume.

For a few days Meta worried a little over the theft, though for some reason it did not seem the same as if she had stolen other things—a piece of jewellery or a purse, for instance. Perfume was something that seemed to belong so definitely to her, that seemed her right to own. Yet, if she were found out? Whenever the buyer of her department or the assistant buyer or the floorwalker glanced at the sparkling glass shelves or at her, she trembled. She must have perfume—she knew that—and she couldn't afford to buy it—and yet—if she were found out—

The fear of being found out lessened as the days passed. A month later Meta stole a second bottle of Ambre Antique. But she took it with the feeling that this theft was final—there were only a few bottles left in stock—she knew she dare not take any more. She still owed money on her clothes—she needed other things—there was no money to buy perfume. . .

VIII

THE day after Meta took the second bottle, Gardiner Mallery came to Meta's counter. It was a rainy, warm day and Meta did not feel like waiting on customers, but none of the other salesgirls did either, seemingly, so she found herself taking Mallery's order. He was an old man, lean, with stooped shoulders and hundreds of little wrinkles around his mouth and eyes. He was a dapperly-dressed old man with clothes far removed from the "classy" Broadway cut that, a year or two before, Meta had thought so stylish. Meta didn't notice him very closely—she never paid much attention to men—she cared more for Billy than she could for anyone else—and this man was old—but Mallery ordered Ambre Antique.

"It's very lovely, isn't it?" she ventured.

So few men knew anything about perfumes—and to find an old man who knew anything at all about them—though he was probably buying it for his wife—

"You like it?" A look of interest, of life, came into Mallery's rather faded eyes.

"Yes, it's my favourite."

Mallery showed his surprise. A young girl—and good looking, who seemed to know something about scents.

"You like all perfumes?" he asked.

"No, not any more. I used to, when I first came here. Now I don't like many of them, not many scents at all."

"Since you're here at the counter,

I suppose? How long have you been here?"

Before she realized it, Meta was telling him about her likes and hates in smells, how she had always cared about odours, and he was nodding and adding experiences of his own, naming things that appealed especially to him.

Mallery had spent most of his life catering to his senses. He did it consciously and deliberately. It seemed the pleasantest thing to do. He had been a good business man in his youth, not the idler he seemed now. He had been able, by crafty methods, to quadruple the money his father had left him.

Having no especial talent along artistic lines, he had pampered himself generally, picking from life only the pleasant things. He prided himself on his ability to know people, on his knowledge of foods and drinks, on his cleverness as an amateur music and art critic, but, most of all, on the development of his sense of smell.

It was really an obsession with him, too, though he pretended that it was just a fad. He did not use perfumes on his own clothing, of course, but he used them, carefully blended, in his home, to express different moods, different sentiments. He gave perfumes to his friends, trying various little tricks on them, to test their sense of smell.

Now, to find a girl in a department store who could talk sensibly about scents—who really seemed to understand things, surprised Mallery. He weighed things rather hurriedly—he was not the sort who makes promiscuous acquaintances—and ended by inviting Meta to have dinner with him the following evening.

Meta was not in the habit of accepting invitations from strangers. She refused with the hauteur she thought an heiress would assume, the invitations of "fresh guys" who approached the counter or met her on the street as she was leaving the store. She knew this was different. Here was a man who understood perfumes, odours, who didn't think the sense of smell was something to be disregarded, avoided—why, he was her sort, he bought Ambre Antique. She accepted the invitation.

Meta was glad, the next evening, that her mother had made her buy new clothes and that they harmonized, in a way, with her sense of smell. They were not evening things, of course—but she shuddered at the thought of the clothes she would have been wearing even a year ago.

Mallery met her at the store, at six. She climbed into his motor with no definite idea of the luxury of it outside of a certain sense-soothing satisfaction. Mallery was just an old man and she didn't like him. But she did like his ideas on smells, the freedom of discussion of scents and odours that being with him gave her. He knew so much more about the sense of smell than she did—than anyone she had ever known—he had studied it—would talk to her. . . .

The dinner was the first good meal that Meta had ever eaten. She had expected a big restaurant, the kind she passed frequently on Broadway, bewilderingly full of lights and music and noice. Mallery took her to a quiet Japanese restaurant on a side street, where they were the only Americans, where young Japanese boys in native costumes brought lacquered trays and tea. There was a sweetmeat, first, with a strange tang—the only Oriental food Meta had ever tasted was chop suey, things like that, in gaudy, ill-smelling Chinese restaurants—and she had not dared to hope for anything like this. Then came soup, and Meta learned to drink it, correctly, from the bowl, and to hold her chopsticks so as to get the morsels of fish. It was good, but the smell—lemony, pungent, was the best of all. Fried shrimps, each in a crisp brown batter, served on rice with a pleasant smelling sauce followed. Then came chicken and vege-

tables, cooked on the table in a brazier and from the cooking rose the odour of a dozen spices. Then a cooling salad that looked like a tiny Japanese garden and, last, twisted rice cakes. It was a splendid dinner. When she sniffed the savoury, new odours and talked with Mallery about them and learned of new smells and new tastes, he didn't seem so old and unpleasant, after all.

A week later, Meta had dinner with Mallery again, at an American restaurant, this time, but even here he did not neglect to select pleasant-smelling foods, a strange contrast to the greasy things served in Ellison Street.

Before she realized it, Meta found that she was dining with Mallery frequently and that each meal brought new pleasures, new and rare odours, soft, comforting surroundings. And, each day, as she went home, Ellison Street seemed a little fouler, a little less clean.

She knew that Mallery liked her only because she was a sort of experiment—and because she was young and pretty—something he had said showed that he felt he was renewing his own youth through her. He was old—but there were so many pleasant things he could give her—things she could get in no other way.

IX

One day Mallery took Meta to his home to dinner. Although they were alone save for the servants—and she had neglected to tell her mother of the arrangement—it did not seem improper to her and it was not, as the conversation had to be almost entirely with the senses of smell and taste.

Mallery lived in a narrow, gloomy-looking house in the East Seventies. In it were treasures he had spent years in collecting; old Spanish tables, bits of Renaissance brocade, Flemish tapestries, French enamels, antique Chinese rugs faded through the years to soft golds and blue-green.

Meta only half-perceived these things. Her sense of colour and form were undeveloped, though she felt that the things were good and that she could learn to like them. But the odours that Mallery's house presented to her were understandable enough; Oriental incenses more subtle than any she had smelled before, aromatic perfumes she had never heard of, Arabic extracts, a dried plant that grew in East India, fragrant resins, a preparation from the rind of an orange that yields bergamot, odd sachets and potpourris and woods and spices. Meta felt as if she were entering a new part of life, as if she were infinitely more awake, and alive with new emotions.

A few weeks later, at dinner, Mallery asked Meta to marry him. Then it came to her that he was just an old man, an unpleasant old man, with bony fingers, and that under his chin the skin hung in loose folds. There were dark pouches under his eyes—he reminded her of a dead baby bird she had seen once, fallen from its nest, in Central Park. His hair was thin and grey and his nose drooping and unpleasant. And sometimes he was sarcastic and sharp—old.

There was Billy—she loved Billy. He was ruddy and young and strong. Her pulse beat when he kissed her and there was a pleasant tingling when he held her in his arms. Yet—Billy meant cheap tobacco and cheap living and cheap smells. She couldn't talk with Billy about smells, even. Billy was fine—no question about that. She loved Billy—Billy—and a little apartment—a little home—the two of them—

"I'll tell you to-morrow," said Meta.

"Must I call for you at the store?" Mallery had asked, then. "It humiliates me to think I must meet you there, the way I do. I don't like to think of you being there."

"Well, I won't go to-morrow, anyhow. I'll—I'll write you a note to-morrow, perhaps to-morrow morning."

All that night Meta thought about it. It was such a little problem. She loved

Billy. She didn't love anyone else. Billy wanted her to marry him right away. What was there to puzzle over?

X

It was a warm night and she couldn't get to sleep. She opened her window and the screen was broken and the flies buzzed in. The smells came up from the street and the narrow court, a dozen smells—animals, people, cheap food, burnt bacon, an open garbage pail. Mallery understood smells. He was so dreadfully sensitive about them—smoked only a certain tobacco, she had learned—a leaf of especial fragrance grown in small quantities in certain parts of the Province of Cavalla. He lived in a whole house full of pleasant smells. There needn't be any more of these awful smells, these malodorous nights.

And the days, too—the perfume counter was pleasant-smelling enough—but the constant waiting on people—and the lunch hour. She hadn't been able to eat lunch lately. The lunch rooms she could afford were stifling and noisy and the odours of cooking and the food itself nauseated her. She couldn't go on this way—why, she couldn't even steal any more perfume—she couldn't afford to buy it—without Mallery.

Of course Mallery was old—and he criticised her, said things about her manners, her breeding—would never be quite satisfied, even, with all of his experimenting—yet—

Meta got up, took out of her dresser drawer a bottle of Ambre Antique that Mallery had given her a few weeks before. She would put a few drops on her night dress, her hair. It would help her get to sleep. The bottle was empty! She must have neglected to cork it tightly or her mother had used the little that had been left.

She shook it violently. She sniffed longingly at the little four-cornered vial, took it to bed with her. It still had a pleasant reminiscence. How good smells could be. She couldn't have perfumes—or dinners—or fresh flowers—with Billy. Billy was a dear, friendly, kind, never old nor unenthusiastic nor critical nor superior. Billy—. She fell asleep towards morning.

She woke up late, called to her mother that she was not feeling well and would not go to the office. She'd marry Billy—she loved him. Surely she could get away from this silly notion about smells. She felt strangely weak, she didn't want to get up or dress. How silly she was. For years now, this nonsense about smells and scents and odours had worried her. Other people didn't have it. It was just imagination, of course. . . .

From the kitchen came the odour of frying bacon, a bit rancid, and eggs not too fresh, the boiling of an inferior brand of coffee, escaping gas. From the court came the noise of children, the smell of refuse pails. The air was stifling, dead.

Meta got out the little pile of empty perfume bottles. But they had been empty too long now. They did not drown the mustiness of the house, the hot, fetid smells of the street. She wanted to marry Billy—she loved Billy—she couldn't stand this—smells—smells—smells—

There was a ring at the bell. Her mother came into her room without knocking and brought a bundle, stood for a minute waiting, went away sullenly when Meta made no move to open it.

Alone, Meta tore off the wrappings. It was a bottle of Ambre Antique, precious in its tan box, from Mallery. It meant marrying him—not just taking this, of course, but yielding, definitely, to the lure of perfume.

She looked at the bottle, fingered the white ground glass stopper, the smooth amber sides, tremblingly. The smells of the street came in, the heavy, jarring noises. She couldn't fight against it.

In a kind of a frenzy, she pulled out the stopper, dabbed the perfume on her

arms, her face, her night dress. She must have perfume—pleasant things—something out of life. She saw Mallery, thin of hair and of cheek, sensitive, sarcastic, neurotic—. With the Ambre Antique still damp on her fingers she walked over to her little desk in the corner and pulled out a piece of writing paper to accept his proposal of marriage.

THE SEVENTH SON

By Francis Carlin

OLD Tim has neither field nor farm;
But they do be saying he has a charm
Against the painful worms that gnaw
The nerves within an aching jaw.

And he showed me once a folded scrap
Of writing, hidden in his cap,
That clears the barn and dairy-shelf
Of rats, when chanted by himself.

And he also has another one,
From the seventh son of a seventh son,
By which he stops the living flood
Of animal and human blood.

So as I said, the heart of Tim
Has not a care at all for him;
While I would give my worth to find
A charm to change a woman's mind.

THE SAVING GRACE

By Arthur Carter

WHEN she met him she had ten thousand dollars on deposit in various savings institutions. Her case was not unusual. They loved for a while, deliriously happy, and then the reaction set in. He tired of her and departed one day without saying good-bye. She figured her bank books pensively. Gone was her illusion, but her account was now fifty thousand.

WHEN the future looks golden, a man is in love. When the past looks golden, he is married.

THE MYSTERIOUS ADDRESS

By James Hanson

HE was a stranger in America and was unable to speak English. For fear that he would be lost he wrote, on a slip of paper, the name above the door of his lodgings.

After a stroll about town he decided to return so he accosted a pedestrian and showed him the paper.

The pedestrian, after reading the paper, glanced at him in a peculiar manner, then went upon his way.

He next stopped a policeman who also read the slip. The policeman patted him upon the shoulder and resumed his beat with a smile.

With a polite bow he exhibited his note to two girls who had just come out of an ice cream saloon—they went on their way, giggling.

An elderly lady came next; she merely turned away haughtily after a glance at the paper in his hand.

At last in desperation he entered a drug store where several clerks were holding a whispered conversation behind the counter. Again the slip—again the roars of laughter.

Thoroughly indignant he broke into a torrent of unprintable language. One of the clerks who could speak his language, translated the words for him.

They were: *"Smoke El Ropo Cigars, Two for Five."*

CORTÉGE

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

BEARING their vases, gentle-browed,
Moving like music down the grass,
Stately and fair, and white as cloud,
The Grecian women pass.

From niche and fountain! . . . Ah, who knows
What wind came crying to their sleep;
What summons broke their long repose,
Why happy tryst they keep!

Those whom the gods have loved are gone,
And lips draw breath that once were stone—
Only a little, broken faun
Weeps out his heart, alone.

INCONGRUITY

By Charles J. Finger

I

THE shade of the water tank was really the only place in which one could sit in comfort, for Kent, Texas, is the hottest and driest place in the state. I cursed the Southern Pacific Railroad and all its officials when I was first sent there to report to the Commercial Department on the cultivation of arid lands. With the report finished, and twelve hours to wait, life seemed easier. That evening I had helped the Captain water his peach orchard and pluck off the yellowing leaves. That luscious peaches could be grown in a section of the country where it rained only one or twice a year, and that peach trees could be watered by pouring a few pints of water into a section of stove pipe set at the roots, had astonished me. I said as much to the Captain, telling him that it was "incongruous."

He pounced on the word with a grunt. "Incongruous! What's incongruous? Let me tell you this, young man, men use that word when facts don't fit in with their notions and imaginings. Here you see a one time ship-captain living on a desert and tending a water tank, and you call it incongruous. Why shouldn't a sailor live in a desert? Why shouldn't he tend a water tank? What's incongruous about that? You fill your heads with a notion, you fellows do, that peaches can't be grown in arid lands, and when you see that they can, you talk about incongruity. You build up a fantastic world for yourselves, you imagine fantastic people, you write books and plays with sure shot cowboys and pants hitching sailors, narrow chested store clerks and whining preachers, keen-eyed soldiers and idiotically happy negroes, treacherous Mexicans and noble Americans, whiskered Russians and funny Frenchmen: all that kind of thing you accept, and then what do you find? You come across a cowboy and find perhaps an ignorant bully. You meet a preacher with a chest like a prize-fighter. Your sailor may be an artist like Conrad. Your negro may be melancholy, and your Mexican gentle. Your perfect American may be a lynching bully, your Russian an effeminate dandy, your Frenchman surly and your Englishman a conceited ass. Then you say 'incongruous.'

"Let me tell you this: it's the world of literature and the drama that's incongruous, if you want to know. This setting up of types—that and the believing in them—that's what's wrong. Take yourself now. I heard you say 'ain't' a dozen times. Yet you parsed and analyzed at school and went through Gould Browne's grammar, didn't you? Don't you see that the incongruous thing is the grammar book?

"You people are always everlastingly setting up theories. Like what we was talking about the other day. Those arrow heads we picked up. According to the theory, every Indian made arrow heads and was skilful at it. I say he wasn't. Some of them made good ones and some of them bad ones and some of them couldn't make any at all. I seen it myself down south when I used to run through the Straits. I seen an Indian turn out a

pretty good arrow in a few minutes out of a piece of broken bottle. Then I seen others made as clumsy as a child would make them. Yet your scientists see the two kinds and classify them as made in different ages. Neo-lithic and Paleo-lithic. See the point?

"It came to my mind the other day how often, when a writer wanted to show off his cleverness, he would refer to some little known country, that is, little known to *him*, and use it as a type of all that's bad. Big as a Patagonian. Stunted as a Terra del Feugian. All that sort of thing.

"Once I took a passenger from Patagonia and she was the best violin player I ever listened to. Yes, and I seen a man who lived with a pack of Indians and all he asked for was to be given a cheese! Fact! You'd call it incongruous? I'd call it natural.

"I thought of writing the story once and fixed up a little of it in my mind, intending to get it set down how things are. But I haven't the gift. I got some of the parts into shape in a way, to be sure. Some of it I thought over so as to get it by heart in a way. And yet there's nothing to the story and it kind of leaves you in the air."

II

For a moment the Captain paused. Then he launched into it.

"Down in the southern end of the American continent," he began, "where the oceans meet, and the land peters out, it is never quite comfortable. Winter wipes out springtime, and summer jumps right into winter. It snows off and on from May to August, and blows every day in summer. A disagreeable wind it is, too, that blows chill. A cold piercing wind, even when the air is bright. If there happens to be a calm, you know a storm is brewing, and when it storms you curse creation, and its maker. A man may get used to it, possibly some do, but I could never understand why any sane white man would go there to live. Yet, there are white folk down there, though they seem in a hurry to get away at any cost—at least those did that I talked to. How people ever come to drift there I don't know. Adventure and gold and sheep raising are inducements, I suppose. Only once I came into real contact with anyone who did want to stay.

"I had the *Volumnia* in those days, a freight steamer running between Bremen and Valparaiso, in the general trade. We never made the Horn, but took the Straits passage, and always hated it when we didn't get through on two tides. Making Punta Arenas either way was all right, but getting laid up between there and either end of the Straits was trouble. I often thought of old Magellan daring to go through and not knowing what he was up against. The evening we picked up a Patagonia passenger, we had made Martha Island when the tide left us, and didn't dare to chance the narrows. That little island, by the way, Magellan cast anchor by. We might have got through, but the sky looked none too good. It was a frowning, angry sky. I noticed the looks of things from the bridge as the anchor chain rattled down.

"The sea was grey, but the setting sun had laid down a belt of silver that ran fan-wise to Terra del Fuego. You get that kind of combination in your mind and it sticks there, when two or three storms come on you. Being so close to shore is what troubles a man. With plenty of sea room it would be different. I got jammed on a lee shore once. But down there you see the skeletons of ships here and there and a melancholy sight it is. Beached ships and dead men worry me. There was a misty gloom that hid the line between sky and sea from east to west, and we knew by those signs that the wind would soon rise. There's an old iron coal hulk anchored fore and aft, double anchors, in Punta Arenas roads that's been drifted from her moorings and fetched

up on Terra del Fuego more than once. However, we were in fairly good shape, what with Martha Island, and Isabel and Magdalena between us and the west. Grand old names they had down there. Religion meant something to those old fellows who first named those islands and capes. Yet, with all their religion, they were bloody-minded men.

"As usual, ten minutes after the silver belt had gone, and when the colour of the water had changed to an oily grey, with a kind of boiling, what we expected came. First, a cat's paw ran over the sea. You always noticed that. It's like the first sign of the tooth ache. You know that troubles are due and can't be dodged. Then began that heaving feel—like a giant asleep, I always say. Next came the white bands of breaking water and then the wind. Wheeoo! It's worse than a typhoon. Worse than a hurricane. It shrieks, and howls and whistles; rope ends crack and yards creak. The very rails tremble to your touch. You feel the full fury of it. It starts at the mast head and the ship heels to the force of it. Then the man on the bridge is grateful for the canvas rigging that shelters him, I tell you, though sometimes even that is stripped to ribbons. The waves leap at you, and run up the ship's sides, and the spray makes you bend your head or gasp. That's the time when the men below get out their cards and play seven up, and the fellow with the accordion makes things worse.

"The first thing I caught sight of after the blast was a bright mark to the windward, just like a point in the mist. It grew to a speck, then a patch, and finally a sail. Through the glass it showed itself to be a small open boat, rigged with a leg-of-mutton sail. She rode the waves well, and held her course, bearing down on us as far as I could make out. It was either masterly handling or sheer luck; you couldn't tell which. As she neared, we made out the man at the tiller, and another figure crouched low, but with the wind and breaking spray it was hard to see. The ticklish time came when she neared us, for the water was bad, but the job was well done.

"I didn't think he would manage it. He rounded our bow by a close shave and brought up in our dead water. Then the little old doll sail dropped and he slipped alongside, holding her off with his hand, though they slid aft rapidly. The wind had dropped suddenly, though the water of course ran rough and choppy. We cast him a line, he caught it and Abraham leaped down and helped him, after a sign from me, catching the little craft cleverly on the top of a swell. The two of them managed well enough, and in no time we had the girl on deck, and a package or so of her dunnage. The man and Abraham followed. The little craft was dropped under our counter, where she rode safe, but out of sight on account of the gathering darkness.

"Now, as I often used to say to my wife, things do not happen trim and ship-shape in life. On the stage and in books, yes, but in life no. Incongruous. That's the word. Things are incongruous. Men that read and never see, get half of things. On the stage, in moving pictures, in books, it's the same. Look at a ship scene on a stage with all hands grouped to face the on-looker: Never was anything like that. In life things are jammed up. Crowded. Confused. So was this. When things are happening, it's something like a dream. Just a series of happenings that you patch together afterwards.

"Imagine yourself getting a glimpse of the group now. You must see it by the light of a binnacle lamp. The men from for'd all crowded aft in glistening oil skins, and the girl slim and tall, with wet curling hair under a close fitting fur cap that had a smart little feather in it, a short red feather, it was, standing straight up. She had a tight fitting coat reaching her knees, and below that her stockinged legs.

Neat legs. Straight legs. You noticed them early, for in those days you did not see legs as you do now. I'm going on sixty and I know. You only saw pictures of them in the Police Gazette, and, let me tell you there were not many ships started out without a supply of that literature aboard.

"Anyway, this girl had pinned up her skirts to keep them away from the sea water. On the outside of the group of men was the stranger with Abraham. No hat. Black, bushy hair. Middle height. Leather coat with red flannel lining showing, and jack boots that reached to his thighs. He had spurs on, too—spurs on board ship, mind you!—big Spanish spurs! I begged them of him before he left as a curio for my boy. Spurs on ship board's incongruous, though. So, too, was what he said, for his first words were:

"'Agnes, how's the violin?'

"Not a word about who's who or Billy be damned, or anything, mind you. Just about the violin. Well, she rummaged around a little in her dunnage and peeked to see.

"'*Sans defauts, mon cher,*' she said.

"I caught the French, for I sailed out of Bordeaux going on five years. Now, there was more of the incongruous, as I came to see afterwards. Here was a Norwegian girl, as I found out, and he—I couldn't quite place him, sometimes he seemed to be Irish, sometimes American or Australian. His language was mixed up, which is the way with people down there. She had little English and he no Norwegian, so they used French a great deal. However, that's nothing to do with the story.

"Presently, the men moved away, and she and the stranger were alone under me. I was still on the bridge. She clapped her hands and skipped a little on her toes, like a child. Being a sea-going Norwegian she did not realize the danger she had been in. They're like that. It's in the blood. Then she remembered her skirts and unpinned them and I was a little sorry for that.

"As she bent over she said:

"'*Maintenant, nous avons le sauf conduit, n'est ces pas, mon Carl? Eh.*'

"He laughed and threw back his stout shoulders. 'Try English, sweetheart,' he said.

"'The adventure was fine,' she said. 'It was the best sail I ever had. And now Norway. Norway—Sandefjord! Carl, Carl!'

"I joined them then, being a little curious about the affair, and after a little looking them over, suggested going below.

"'Captain,' said this Carl, as we went, 'I want to make arrangements. You are bound for Bremen, ain't you? . . Will you take a passenger? . . . I know you're a freighter. . . . But this is an emergency. There's lots to explain and all that. . . . But it's all right. I'm willing to pay. It's most like a case of life and death.'

"In the cabin talk was easier. We had pretty fair quarters on the *Volumnia.* She took off her coat, stepped to the mirror set in the door panel, and did womanly things to herself. You know how a woman does. A touch here and a touch there. Then she linked her arm through the man's. They were a bonny pair standing there, bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked, and she not a day older than eighteen, he three or four years older, I dare say. There was a little general talk, and then I let them know that I wanted to know.

"'It's this way,' said he. 'I haven't much money to speak of, and we left in a rush. Besides, we don't carry loose cash in Patagonia. But you can let her have a cabin, can't you, Cap.'

"Now I let them run on, and explain for some time and then, 'Maybe I'll make it somehow,' I said. I would have liked to have carried the girl free, for the affair seemed interesting and I like to help when I can, especially in a runaway case, which this clearly was, but the owners were Bremen people and it's not easy to do

things quietly in the shipping line. People on shore are free to cut up all sort of capers, but we sailors are watched pretty close. There's mighty little freedom on the sea. Well, there was some talking, with me hesitating and considering the steward, and all that, then Carl started in.

"'This is Miss Neilson, Captain—Agnes Neilson. She's going to her home in Sandefjord, Norway. I guess I got enough to pay the price.' And then followed more explanations, with the girl helping out now and then.

"He dug down in his corduroy pants and began producing things. A couple of English sovereigns, a $5 gold piece and some loose silver—Chilean, and some Argentine paper. Then he laid down a watch and chain, a silver ring, and three small gold coins that were strange to me. I looked at them closely.

"'Popper money,' he explained, seeing my curiosity. 'In Terra del Fuego Julio Popper's got a concession, you know, a gold mining monopoly, and makes his own money. Works Argentine convicts. Graft game. These are worth a gramme each. I been there working round. . . . And there's this, too.'

"He laid down a small bottle of gold dust, then fished in an inner pocket and produced three or four folded papers.

"'These here are horse papers. That arrow's my brand and you can keep them till your next trip and I'll be on hand to redeem 'em when you make Punta Arenas. Or you can give them to the Captain del Puerto.'

"I suggested he had enough collateral without the horse certificates.

"'Yes, but you see, I want you to take out the passage money and give the rest to Agnes. She's got to get to Sandefjord, you know. Bremen isn't the end of her trip. Say, Captain—'

"He broke off and turned to the girl.

"'*Dirai-je?* he asked.

"She nodded. Then he explained in Alfred Jingle fashion—you know, choppy, disconnected sentences. This was partly his nervousness, for he was a nervous kind of chap. It don't follow that, because a fellow can bring a boat up in a gale of wind, he isn't nervous. Men are everything at different times. Many a hero's just a fool runagate. Anyway, the lad says:

"'It's this way, Captain. I'm going north soon's I can. As soon's I settle up things and sell out. We're going to get married. Her father's old Neilson, skipper on the three-masted schooner *Adulacion*. He brought her out here and she wants to go back home. This is no place for a decent woman, anyway. And so, well, I'm helping her out, you see. That's all, and it's all straight and square and above board, Cap.'

"Now, I knew old Neilson. He was a cantankerous, beetle-browed, hard-drinking old scoundrel and just the fellow to try and make a soft thing for himself by trading off his daughter. Marrying her off, I mean! It's all the same. Piecing this and that together, I came to see how matters stood. Leastaways, I fancied I did. Well, I assured him at last that the collateral, so to speak, would suffice, though I didn't want to seem too willing, for to tell the truth, I sort of wanted to have that girl along on the trip. The steward thought he could fix up a place for her.

"When it was all settled, this Carl threw off his leather coat and stood there clad in his blue jersey with a bright red handkerchief loosely knotted about his throat, looking happily at the girl. She smiled back at him and a prettier set of teeth you never saw. Of course, we'd been standing around all this time, and now sat down. Up she jumped a moment later, then leaned over and kissed him fair and square on the lips. It was good to see, though he wiped it off as a boy does when his mother kisses him. Well, I lit my pipe and pretended not to notice. Youth is youth!

"'My Carl,' she said, 'we must *not* lose each other.'

"'Never fear, Agnes,' said he. 'One doesn't fight for nothing in this world. (Badly fooled, wasn't he?) Things always come out right if you stick. You're safe enough, girl. They can't get you now. And you'll weigh anchor at the turn of the tide. But it'll be three months before I get to Norway. Wonder what I'll do there? I'll get back and sell out at Gallegos, then vamoose.'

"That was the line of talk, all planning, hoping and expecting with everything as right as that girl in Browning's poem. After a good deal more of it, he looked at his watch laying on the table with the other truck, and spoke about the tide. I seen that the lad knew the sea in these parts.

"'Lord,' he said, 'it's blowing again harder than ever.'

"The wind had risen again after a lull. That's the way of it at that time of the year.

"'But you? You shall get back in safety, dear?' she asked.

"'It's no trick. Never fear,' said he, with a grin. But the grin was half bravado.

"There was some more planning and a good deal of laughing. She looked at him intently, leaning her cheek on her hand, her elbow resting on the table. I swear she was in dead earnest. One can tell. Yet there were no dramatics about it. She stuck in that name, 'Hero,' a bit too often, but it was only a pet name with her. I want you to get that straight.

"'Oh, Carl,' she said, suddenly. 'I almost forgot. My dear little Shakespeare book!'

"'Hell, yes,' he said. 'I clean forgot. You'll want that on the trip. But I kept it dry.'

"He pulled up his jersey, thrust his hands into his pants and brought out a little, red, leather covered book—a Temple edition. It was 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' She took it, fluttered a page or two, then closed it again, petted it and kissed it.

"'Oh, *mon cher! Je suis heureuse!*' she said, and, taking the sleeve of his leather jacket that hung over the back of the chair, kissed that. 'I love that coat,' she said.

"Now see more incongruity there. In ordinary, you don't associate a Shakespeare play with runaway girls in the Straits of Magellan, do you? You never see a girl kiss a coat sleeve in a moving picture. And when we had a bite of supper, there was more of it, for the talk ran on books for quite a time. That annoyed me a little, for I wanted to get this Carl to talk about Patagonia. A sailor never gets to know anything about foreign parts. The girl, too, she liked to talk about books, and in her delight presently dropped into Norwegian, which none of us understood, and then, when she found herself doing so, stopped, confused, and blushed. So they fell to planning again and then dropped into French, which he spoke less readily than she. So I got up to leave them awhile, and before I had closed the door, she was on his knee.

"To tell the truth, I felt pretty bad a little later on when his boat was brought alongside, and Abraham dropped over and stepped the little mast. She clung to her lad then and kissed him over and over again like my little girl used to do when I left for a trip, he, meanwhile, saying nothing, but just patting her on the back. Then he stepped up to me and said: 'Take care of her, Captain. She's true blue.'

"I swear I saw the glitter of water in his eyes as he shook my hand. Then over the side he went, and he and his little craft vanished into the dark, dancing among the white caps like a mad thing, and he too busy to look back, of course. There was just a wave of his hand.

"She stood looking awhile and when it was out of sight, flung out her arms and cried:

"'Oh, come back, my boy! Come back! Take me with you!' Then, after a moment, she said, 'Oh, Carl—

hero, why did I let you go?' And then she went below crying.

"As I said, I felt pretty bad for awhile, but Hyde, who was with me on the bridge, said, 'She'll get over it. Girls always get over that sort of thing.'

III

"We were well abreast of Tristan d'Achuna before Agnes cheered up. We did what we could for her, especially the cook, who was a kind-hearted Portugee, and I had her playing chess in a week. That's a pastime for me, and so is cribbage. Chess and cribbage and reading poetry. I sure love poetry. But chess beats all. You know how it is with a game of chess and learning a new one the game. First you get to wishing they could play better. Then they win a game for the first time and you're sure it was a fluke, or you were careless and could win if you gave your mind to it. Then, one day, you wake up to find your pupil's beating you two out of three. Of course you get angry. No one likes to be checkmated. A chess player'd quarrel with an angel. Well, what with the cook and the sea air and the chess, she began to perk up and it was good to see her around.

"Playing with her, little by little I learned a whole chapter or two of her affair with Carl. She seemed to be reminded of it one night when I had threatened her queen with my bishop. It was a neat trick and I had worked for it quite a few moves. She caught on, though, and covered with her knight. Then she clapped her hands and laughed. It was none of your 'tee-hee' laughs, but a real laugh—a jolly laugh like that of a school girl at the age when they are sweetest.

"'The knight to the rescue of the queen!' she said. 'That reminds me of Carl. Don't you think he's a dear boy, Captain?'

"Then followed some of the tale, though it took some prompting, of course. It seemed that she had met the lad while she was stopping at the little ramshackle place they call a hotel at Punta Arenas. He had come in from the camp—a rough-looking, tough-looking chap, I suppose. Anyway, he stood by listening to her play the piano, then said he liked a certain piece, picking up the book. She had told him that it was a duet. Then it came out that he could play the piano, too. There's more of what critics would call incongruity. But then once I seen a nigger down in New Orleans talking broad Scotch. He had been born and raised in Perthshire. It's easy explained, you see, when you come to know the facts. But if a playwright had put a character such as him on the stage talking with a Highland accent and splashing in a word or two of Gaelic now and then, as he did, the critics would go plum crazy.

"However, these two got to duet playing, and that led to love. Music always does. When you come to think of it, so does everything else. I fell in love with my wife because she had a lisp. Anyway, these two were thrown together until old man Neilson blew in, and when he came ashore and found how things stood, there was an end of it. He took the girl aboard the *Adulacion* and kept her there. Then one night, it was in a storm, too, this Carl got a boat and came abroad, took her off and started across the border with a half dozen horses, thinking they'd make the Argentine and be married in Gallegos.

"But it seems that the *alcalde* there was a kind of friend of Neilson's. That's natural, it being a port with a good deal of smuggling going on. Anyway, as soon as they set foot there, Carl was put in *cuartel* and the girl taken to the wife of the *alcalde*, where she had to stay until old Neilson dropped anchor. Then, of course, he took her back with him to Punta Arenas. Carl got out and found her again. Then followed another runaway, which brought her on board the *Volumnia*. Of course, it was all very worrying and exciting, I expect, but then they probably enjoyed it. Youth

in youth, and adventure's dear to the soul of it.

"Well, as she perked up, she dressed prettier and was good to look at. Every day she sat on the main-hatch. That was her favourite place, although I had had a poop awning rigged up. But contrary to usual opinion, it's not always hot in the tropics. I've seen it cool enough for a light overcoat once or twice. I reckon she liked the hatch because it was there she last stood with her Carl. Anyway, she wrote him a letter every day and gave it me every evening when we sat down to chess. I was to mail all of them when we got to Bremen.

"Things went along that way until we ran into some of those tropical sunsets. You never get tired of looking at them. They always make me think what a silly, dirty, fussy thing a man is, grubbing away on ships and in towns when there are places to live in and be happy in. It's the same kind of thought that gets you when you wonder why the Esquimaux don't come south to a better climate. It's there for them. They've only got to walk.

"Let's see. Where was I? Oh, yes. This night was when Tristan d'Achuna showed itself a brown gob on the eastern horizon. It seemed to be swimming in a sky of gold and purple and crimson that evening. There were violet splashes across the sky, and the sea was opal. And there was a great milk-white streak churning behind us. Standing at the rail aft stood Agnes. She was dressed in some light, fluttery thing with a blue sash, and her hair was braided in two long plaits. Right then I wanted to take her in my arms and love her, so young and healthy and straight she was.

"Well, later that night, I sat fanning myself and looking at the sky. The glory had gone out of the west, and above was silver and velvet with star dust sprinkled. The soft swish of the sea sounded like rustled silk. Then the music began. So skilfully she played that you would have thought there were two violins. Soon it seemed as if all things harmonized, and the faint thump, thump of the engines was as much a part of it all as the moon itself. I wouldn't have moved then for a fortune. I only wanted to hear. There was music that I knew, and music that I didn't, and the last was the best. It set me thinking of a life on shore, and I fancied myself a fool for following the sea. What is an ideal, anyway, but discontent?

"After that, we had music for many nights, and presently Hyde joined in. He could sing well, too, and she often played a sort of accompaniment to his song. On those nights, those quiet nights, when the sea is phosphorent and now and then flying fish leaps like a silver arrow, the little concerts were doubly enjoyable. I loved to look up at the mast head and watch it swaying as much as I used to enjoy laying on the grass when a boy, and marking the tree tops wave against the sky.

"Then, one night when we were nearing the Cape Verde Islands, I chanced upon the two of them, Hyde and Agnes, and his arm was about her waist. I could see them against the white wake.

IV

"Well, I never interfere. I never did. You can't try to set things straight outside yourself without making a worse mess than that which you would clear away. But after that, the two of them seemed to become lovers of the shadows, and the music became the music of love, and then stopped altogether. I never got really suspicious, though, until we came to Las Palmas. There, going below, I ran into the two of them coming from her cabin. She looked ill at ease and her face was covered with blushes when she saw me. That was the first time I really suspected anything; but, of course, I never knew for sure anyway. One never does. It's all guess work

at the best of times. At the Canaries, where we put in for coal, Hyde got shore leave and she went with him and they came back as happy as two children.

"When we warped up alongside the dock at Bremen, the very first one to step on board was Hyde's wife, with her little boy, so it came about that I was the last one on the ship that Agnes talked to. She was one of those women one meets now and then who seem to part the curtain that separates man and woman. Some of them do it with a word and some with a look. Since I had seen her with Hyde in the cabin, I had, in a way, cooled off to both of them. The chess games had stopped and she had given me no more daily letters to take care of. Yet my coolness fell from me when she came up to me as I stood by the gang way. She put up her gloved hand, and, as a child might, toyed with the button of my coat.

"'Captain,' she said, 'I am sorry we have not been friends as we were.'

"Of course, I said things intended to be pleasant, then mentioned the letters that she had given me to mail. Then, before I well knew what I was saying, I added, 'But you have not written lately. Poor Carl!'

"She looked troubled for an instant, but the cloud passed. Then she said: 'But, yes, I have. Every day as usual.' At that she held up her left hand, and there, sure enough, was a packet of letters.

"'Shall I take them, too?' I asked, reaching for them.

"'No,' said she, and, as she spoke, she reached over the side and dropped them into the black water between the ship and the dock. They floated for a moment, then swirled under.

"Now, I have always said that there is no understanding women, and I still think so, though I haven't seen one to speak of for a long time. There she stood as cool as a cucumber, as the saying goes. She looked me straight in the eyes and said:

"'So, Captain, please throw the rest of them away. You will, will you not?'

"'But what about Carl,' I asked. 'There he is waiting for you. Or he is coming for you?'

"'Captain,' said she, 'it is all different now. He is a good lad. The way he would have me I am not. It is nothing. Men think too much of some things and women humour them.'

"There wasn't much I could say, but I did manage to ask her what I should say if Carl came aboard at Punta Arenas next trip.

"'Tell him—' she began and then stopped. Mind you, she looked me straight in the eye all the time. After a while she added, 'It is nothing. It is silly. Tell him nothing. What you will.'

"Then she went gaily enough down the gang plank, waving to me once from the dock, and was swallowed up in the crowd.

V

"The *Volumnia* had made the round trip between Bremen and Valparaiso twice and Carl did not come aboard at Punta Arenas, so pretty near half a year had gone and the affair had nearly passed from my mind before I picked up the thread of it again. Then the Company agent at Valparaiso gave me orders to stop near Dawson Island to pick up a load of seal and otter skins. Now, outside of Terra del Fuego, Dawson Island is the most Godforsaken place in the wide world, believe me. Every man sailing the Magellan Straits knows that. There are chains of low, snow-patched hills, and a piercing cold wind rushing down them even when the sky is blue. There is a lonely mountain and shrub forest, a sandy beach with mussel-covered rocks, black and ugly, here and there, and a crowd of silent Indians paddling about in canoes. That's the memory I get of the place.

"We dropped anchor there one snowy day in June. There was the

same ugly hill dropping down to the yellowish-white sandbeach. The place looked gloomy, cold and wet. The water was a greyish, slatey green, and hatefully, oily smooth. Sort of sliding water it was. Until you saw the pigmy people on the beach pushing out their canoes, and noticed how little they seemed, you would have thought the anchorage was only a few yards from shore. There was nothing to tell distance by.

"We saw to it that everything that was loose or stealable was securely fastened, for we were told that these people do not leave much that is liftable behind. A piece of iron, we were told, made their hands itch. But that is all nonsense. When you know it, there is not much difference between savages and civilized people as far as honesty is concerned. But we were a bit afraid of the lice. Then the women, too—a man wants to be careful, for a run on the medicine chest is no joke on a long voyage with half the men laid up.

"Presently they were alongside—a half hundred of them. Naked, of course. Stark naked, men, women and children. Some of them had a bit of capa strung across their shoulders, but most of them were stark. Somehow, they made me think of a picture I saw once at the Academy in London. It was one of those pictures you burn to look at but want to see when no one is around. Half ashamed you are, you know, and ashamed for being so. You see a lot of people passing such a picture with a side-long glance and then go to the other side of the room and take a good look while pretending to admire the Portrait of a Gentleman, or some Dutch scene with a windmill. You know the kind, I dare say. The one I have in mind showed a crowd of women bathing and standing around sunning themselves. Handsome figures, of course.

"These Indians were like that, only bronze. Good, clean, trim figures they were, with straight legs and half curly hair tossing like a mane. The cold never bothers them. The snow falls on their naked bodies, and on the bodies of the babies, too, down there in the canoes. And they are a quiet people, a gentle folk. A woman will stand before you looking you square in the eye, straight as a spear, strip, stark naked, hands hanging down easily or resting on hips. It's you, all dressed and covered then, that is ashamed.

"Well, sir, in one of the canoes there was Carl himself. In his canoe were two women. It gave me such a start at first that I almost expected to see Agnes, there. He swarmed up on deck, just waved to me, and did his business with the purser, delivering the skins and getting the truck he needed in exchange. Biscuits, sugar, knives, blankets, tools and that kind of thing was what he asked for and got. Then the main bunch paddled back to shore, getting their canoes over the kelp beds cleverly, and the whole job was done in less than two hours, though we had an extra hour on account of the tide's turn. Well, wishing to learn something of the country, I asked Carl in the cabin, while his two women waited in the canoe with a crowd of curious sailors gaping at them from above. Do you know that at times you feel kind of ashamed for your own people when you are among savages?

"Forthwith Carl asked me for a few books, a Dutch cheese and a ham. I wanted him to take a few newspapers, but he did not seem to care for them. Then I opened up with a few questions about the country, but got no information. I suppose it would have been the same way if he had tried to get me to talk about the ship.

"'You got Agnes to Bremen all right?' he asked.

"'Yes. It was a pleasant trip. That girl could certainly play the violin,' I said.

"'Glad she got away. These Straits 're not fit for a white woman anyway. Of course, I never wrote. When I got back to Punta Arenas that night they

put me in *cuartel.* Three weeks I was in that rotten place and then beat it.'

"'Pardoned,' I hazarded.

"'Pardoned nothing! Not on your life! Long as you can get money they let you out between six and nine every night for a *pasea.* I had money because I got them to sell some of my horses. They charged me about 80 per cent. commission. Well, on these *paseas* there's a guard along, of course. You're on your honour, you see. One day I thought "To hell with honour!" and hit the guard in the jaw, made for the beach, got a boat and beat it. There wasn't any romance about it, you see. Romantic doings don't come my way. Well, of course I can't go back there. I'm going to stay here till I get a stake and then try my luck gold digging. . . . Wonder if Agnes ever wrote?'

"'Why,' said I, 'she wrote every day on the ship. When she left at Bremen she said to tell you—you know—she was true and all that. . . She thought a lot of you.'

"'Yes, she was a straight girl all right. Wish I could have held up my end of the bargain. What's a man to do? I had to beat it. If it had been a free country, now—. You see, knocking the daylights out of a Chilean soldier's no joke when you are out on honour. If you get caught it means a 9 a.m. fiesta up against a stone wall with a firing squad for company. So then I landed here and got in the sealing game with these Indians. Of course, I got tied up. What's man to do? Of course, it's all off with Agnes now, but I'm glad she's out of it. She was too straight for me and my kind.'

"'Well, some day—,' I began.

"'No, Cap. No chance. Things are so that a woman's straighter than a man. They're built that way. You fellows in civilization are different to us down here. You can be straight. It's easy. Don't you know that sometimes I sort of wish that women weren't so good and pure and all that? I'm just a natural born scallywag, I guess.'

"The two of us smoked for awhile, saying nothing. Then, to make him feel better, I said:

"'Well, lad, they are that way and that's all there is to it. Maybe you are right and she was too good for you.'

"It was plain that he was half way pleased with that, judging by the way he smoked, for any man'd rather feel like a martyr than a fool. But on the whole I was rather disappointed with the conversation, for I wanted to learn something of the country, you see, and why he wanted to stay in it, but he fell to talking about Socialism and that kind of stuff and the chance was lost. That's the worst of following the sea. You go everywhere and see nothing but the same old thing.

"Well, I'm getting sleepy and it's time to turn in. Good-night."

IT is a woman's glory to believe in a man when others distrust him; it is her tragedy to discover that the others are right.

IT is easy enough to convince a woman. The trouble is to keep her convinced.

INCONCLUSIVE RESULT OF A CLINICAL EXPERIMENT

By S. Jay Kaufman

HE and I were reading.

I said, "This philosophy seems to be that the unexpected always happens. It would say, for example, that if a man said, 'I'd like to know you' to the first three women passing a given spot, not one would ask the conventional 'How dare you?'"

I said, "I think they would."
He said, "I think they would not."
We made a wager, both agreeing to speak to three women.

His three said to him, "You may," and he does.
My three said to me, "How dare you?"
Say, what's wrong with me?

SONG

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

WHAT shall I tell my old Love?
Ah, yes! At last I know:
"Your love was like a garden
All cold and still with snow.
You told me that when Spring came
The golden fruit would grow."

What shall I tell my new Love?
Only this I'll say:
"My heart was chilled and hungry
And Spring was far away—
Your love is like a thrilled house
When Summer came to stay!"

THE fact that a man is successful with women proves nothing. What counts is the quality of the women he is successful with.

LE PETIT EXIL

By Han Ryner

PAR ce dimanche d'été lourd et orageux, comment m'étais-je laissé entrainer à ces fêtes bruyantes? Sous un soleil torride, que mes compagnons déclaraient "presque méridional," je m'étais arrêté avec la foule en différents points de la ville de Sceaux et, devant des bustes minuscules, j'avais entendu bourdonner d'interminables discours. A travers la torpeur que tissaient autour de moi chaleur et rhétorique, quelques mots, plus souvent répétés sans doute, étaient seuls parvenus à mon esprit. Mais, dans les paroles confusément des orateurs qui se suivaient et se ressemblaient comme des frères criards, "petite patrie" et "grande patrie," s'étaient-elles affrontées hostilement ou amoureusement enlacées? Détail que j'ignorais, et, à dire tout le vrai, il m'importait peu. Leurs luttes ou leurs enlacements m'avaient causé une intense migraine et, si je n'aimais héroïquement toutes mes patries, j'aurais été capable de garder rancune à ces deux-là.

Dans le train du retour bondé et étouffant, un lourd Marseillais ronflait sur mon épaule meurtrie. En face de moi, un jeune homme mince, blanc et rose comme une fille du Nord, au poil rare et d'un blond blafard, Du Midi, celui-là? On avait peine à le croire, quand, par hasard, il se trisait. Aussi faisait-il résonner presque continuellement un accent provençal, si excessif.

Ses paroles m'étaient odieuses: il rabâchait encore de grande et de petite patrie, l'insupportable garçon! Mais ce n'était là qu'un exorde qui, selon la pente naturelle aux bavards, allait le conduire à des confidences sur son intéressante personne.

Je ne tardai guère à savoir qu'Achille Blagard, né en Avignon, aimait sa petite patrie au point d'avoir beaucoup souffert quand il avait subi "le petit exil."

Le petit exil! Le bizarrerie de la formule m'amusa et je me surpris à écouter. Une narration commençait, où le conteur par instants me sembla spirituel, quoique trop fréquemment, hélas! il s'appliquât à parler comme un livre... comme un livre prétentieux et traduit d'une langue à la fois mièvre et grandiloque. Dame! c'est un peu mêlé —telle une bouillabaisse—la verve de là-bas...

Voici ce que disait, d'un accent trop provençal, le jeune homme trop blanc et trop rose, au trop rare et trop blafard:

* * * * *

— Oui, monsieur, le hasard taquin et la volonté indifférente de mes chefs m'avaient envoyé dans une petite ville franc-comtoise.

D'abord, avec cet amour du changement qui caractérise la prime jeunesse, j'avais goûté ta grace calms, ô blanche sous-préfecture assise parmi les prairies, au bord de la Saône sinueuse, lenté, comme attardée en un enlacement d'amour.

Puis ta forêt, toute voisine, m'avait appelé de son murmure, nombreux et chuchoteur comme ma Méditerranée quand elle s'endort dans les bras du soir.

J'allais par un sous-bois profond et dense... Trop profond et trop dense, peut-être... Oui, monsieur, un peu trop de ténèbre, un peu trop de mystère, comme un poids d'ombre et d'inconnu... Je me souviens: ma joie se tigrait d'inquiétude.

Mais voici. Dans le beauté sombre, une clairère s'ouvrit, lumière et sourire. Entre de larges divans de gazon, une source gazouillait, claire et fraiche comme une voix de jeune fille.

Je m'allongeai, songeur, dans ce paradis.

Une ivrèsse ancienne se mêlait à mon enchantement. Je me rappelais, moins beau et moins pénétrant, me semblait-il, un paysage de chez moi: une source un peu pauvre dans un bosquet un peu petit, parmi de l'herbe un peu rare et un peu rase.

Malgré le parfum d'enfance et de ce

souvenir, je m'appliquais à être impartial et je monologuais avec une justice de cosmopolite :

— Ici, c'est plus complet, plus volupteux. Mieux que celle bue dans l'entrelacement puéril de mes petits doigts, cette eau mérite le nom poétique de *Fontaine d'Amour*.

Une chanson jolie et pas lointaine du tout me fit relever la tête. J'apercus, a quelque pas, un jeune paysan de formes âpres et robustes.

— Comment s'appelle ce délicieux endroit ? lui demandai-je.

— Ça, me fut-il répondu dans un rire, c'est un canton bien connu des garçons et des filles at ça s'appelle la *Fontaine de Trousse-Cotillon*.

Héurte par ces syllabes gauloists, je compris tout ce qui manquait â ce paysage pour égaler la grâce provençale. Il lui manquait, tonnerre de l'air; il lui manquait, tonnerre de l'air ! il lui manquait la poésie et la delicatesse des indigènes.

* * * * *

Après ces paroles—définitives, n'est-ce pas ?—Blagard se reposait, comme Dieu, le septième jour.

Je lui adressai une objection :

—Tout à l'heure, à Sceaux, je vous ai entendu dire que vous aimiez beaucoup Paris.

—Oh ! comme c'est différent ; s'écria-t-il, les mains vers le plafond. Paris, monsieur, mais c'est la plus grande ville du Midi, et la plus belle, et la plus vraiment méridionale. Nous y sommes plus de provençaux que dans cette odieuse et cosmopolite Marseille, par exemple. Marseille, prèmiere Echelle du Levant.

Il n'en dit pas davantage.

Depuis quelques instants, le Marseillais, lourd à mon épaule, ne ronflait plus. Il s'agitait comme un homme qui se réveille.

L'injure faite à sa ville le dressa, superbe d'indignation. Péremptoire, il ordonna :

— Cesse donc tes mensonges, stupide météque belge.

Achille Blagard fut pareil à un homme qui n'entend pas. Toute son attention était prise per le dehors. Justement on entrait dans une gare.

— Déja Montsouris ! s'étonna-t-il. Je demeure tout près d'ici.

Il sauta sur le quai, disparut, tandis que le Marseillais, haussant des épaules aussi fortes que dédaigneuses :

— Ce n'est pas Montsouris qu'il habite, le menteur ! C'est Montmartre.

Il ajouta :

— Si ça ne fait pas pitié !... Cet Achille Blagard est né à Lille. Son père venait d'Anvers et sa mère arrivait d'Ostende.

Il y eut un vacillement dans les yeux du parleur, une hesitation tremblante sur ses lèvres. Puis il reprit :

— Oui, monsieur, d'Ostende... Et si je n'ajoute pas : " Dans un bourriche," c'est parce quo, nous autres de Marseille, nous ne frappons jamais une femme, même avec un fleur.

Et il conclut, l'homme de Marseille :

— Voyez-vous, quand quelqu'un qui se dit méridional se montre bavard, vantard et indiscret, on peut être sûr qu'il n'est pas bon teint... C'est à ces caracterès que je reconnais les hommes du Nord.

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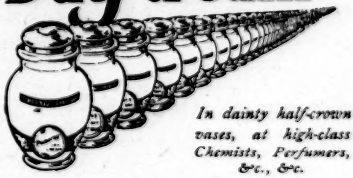

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MOTORS AND MOTORING

By W. Whittall

TWO MOTOR SHOWS IN 1920

It has been obvious for years past that something would have to be done in the matter of the Motor Show, which has outgrown in size and importance even the accommodation available at Olympia. The industry is growing at such a pace and the number of new firms coming in is so great that the Motor Show is in danger of ceasing to be truly representative and thus to fall off considerably in interest. From time to time various suggestions have been made for removing the Show to Earl's Court or the White City, where it would certainly find enough floor space, but would be housed in a series of detached buildings, which would, to my mind, totally destroy all the interest. The latter depends so much on concentration and surroundings that it is quite essential that the Show should be held in a single building. But the trouble is that there is no building in the country large enough to house it, and the Society of Motor Manufacturers is therefore driven to make other arrangements to ensure the representative character of its annual exhibition. What it proposes to do now is to divide next year's exhibition into two, and to hold one Show in October and another during the second week in November. For the purpose it is intended at the moment to divide the cars into power classes, and to make the one Show an affair for cars up to 15·9 rating and the other for vehicles above that rating. That seems to me to be an excellent method of classification. It has been suggested that classification should be by price, but that would be unsatisfactory for many reasons. Again, it has been seriously put forward that there should be one Show for British vehicles and another for those of foreign origin. I am afraid that is open to all sorts of objections, which need not be entered into here. On the whole, I am in favour of classification by power rating, though it may be found that in view of the very large and increasing numbers of light and medium powered cars the 15·9 limit will be found too high, and that it will be necessary to fix the maximum for the "small" Show at about 13·9 rating. However, the last word has not been said by the Society, which will doubtless give the fullest consideration to all these factors before a final decision is reached.

THE TAXATION OF ROAD TRAFFIC

A Committee has been appointed by the Minister of Transport for inquiring into and reporting upon the question of the taxation of and regulations for road traffic. It is presided over by Sir Henry Maybury, the Director of Roads under the Transport Ministry, and who is better known to motorists as the late County Surveyor of Kent, where he earned golden opinions by the excellence of his methods in relation to the roads of the county. The members of the Committee have been selected for their close association with the interests they represent, and it may be said that it is a very strong Committee indeed. From the point of view of the motorist the appointment of this Committee is very welcome. The incidence of taxation as it is at present levied on the road user is eminently unfair and burdensome to a single form of transport, which finds itself taxed to the limit the while other forms of traction pay little or nothing at all towards the cost of maintaining the roads they use to their profit and convenience. I do not think there is any doubt, after viewing the composition of the Committee, that it will fail to recommend that a more equitable basis of traffic taxation shall be brought into being.

Apropos of this question of taxation, I shall be very much surprised if one of the Committee's recommendations is not in the shape of a proposal for a flat rate of fuel tax on imported motor spirit at the rate of fourpence per gallon, in place of the present anomalous scale of sixpence per gallon with all sorts of rebates and allowances. It will probably recommend that home-produced fuel should be tax free, but that I regard as a highly controversial matter. It must be remembered that the fuel tax is not an impost designed to encourage one fuel at the expense

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of another. It is a direct highways tax, the proceeds of which are applied to road maintenance, and from that point of view it is difficult to see on what ground the motorist who is so favourably situated as to be able to run on benzol should get his use of the roads for nothing while the user of imported fuel has to pay.

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ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Various Hands

Christmas is in the air! Balls, country-house parties, and a hundred and one other delightful things of the past are once more of the glorious present, and a cheery undercurrent of excitement seems to pervade everything. My happiest hunting-ground for the trappings necessary to the conditions was Harvey Nichols at Knightsbridge, for nowhere else did I find such a variety of attractions. The children are particularly well catered for; a sympathetic buyer with a very soft corner for the kiddies has laid in a large stock of party frocks. The embryo woman loves to look dainty, and enjoys herself very much more if she has on a new frock for the occasion. Quite the most alluring of these were made in ethereal looking net and lace, very much flounced, and tied with pink or blue ribbons, while illusive little posies of flowers tucked themselves away and got themselves lost in the misty cloud of gossamer net. These little frocks sound very perishable, but their looks belie them—for nothing is more serviceable in reality. White shoes and stockings or white stockings and pink or blue shoes to match the favoured ribbons complete the pretty effect, and a wreath of tiny flowers, for which Messrs. Harvey Nichols will be responsible, would make a fitting crown for the little Queen of Hearts. But the small girls are not the only ones catered for. The débutante will find an endless choice of pretty dance frocks at very reasonable prices—a thing of great importance in these *nouveau pauvre* days!—and she will feel as well turned out as anybody in the room. Her richer sister, who can afford to be exclusive, will also find the genuine

THE ROSE IN THE WILDERNESS.

"MRS. DESPARD," announced the maid. For the minute the name was unfamiliar; then, as a very perfectly-tailored girl came into the room I laughed.

"Why, Ruth, I was just wondering who the stranger was. I always forget my friends' married names. Tea, Marie, and hot buttered toast. Sit down, Ruth, you've happened in on coal and butter day. Well, how goes it?"

The firelight flickered on a pretty face that was momentarily hardened in a rather worried look.

"Fairly well," she said, as she loosened her furs. "Fact is, I've come to say good-bye. I've had a cable from David, and he wants me to go out to Australia to him on the next boat. Of course, I'll love to see him again, but it's all rather uprooting, isn't it? I've never lived on a ranch in my life, and I think I shall be rather homesick at first."

I sympathized, and we talked for some time. Then she said: "You know I'm rather worried by the frivolous problem of keeping my looks. David told me that what first attracted him was the fact that I looked so different from most Australian women. But under Australian conditions, shall I be able to keep it up? For example, I have my hair washed and waived at a hairdresser's every fortnight: that will be impossible in my new life. And I look hideous with straight hair."

"Why, that's easily solved: take out a good supply of silmerine with you; once out there you can order it from Sydney, which will be your nearest town. You only want to damp your hair with it slightly and put it in slides or a curler or two, which can easily be concealed under a boudoir cap. Get your hair accustomed to silmerine treatment on the voyage out; then, by the time you land, it will probably have developed a distinct natural tendency to curl, and will only occasionally need damping. Of course, it is much better for the hair than to sap all it's gloss and vitality with hot irons. For a home shampoo, I think you cannot beat stallax; a tea-spoonful of stallax granules to a cup of hot water will make the most delicious foaming lather, which cleanses the hair splendidly. You'll be able to dry it in the sun in no time in that gorgeous climate! If I were you, I should always keep some reliable tonic in the house, for you never know when your hair may require a little stimulating. Yes, boranium and bay rum is excellent; I always use it. I should take some boranium out with you. You can get it in very convenient little packages. Also, I think it would be a very wise plan to keep some tammalite by you; dark hair like yours has a very disconcerting habit of turning grey in patches. Why don't you take out some tammalite? You may not need it for a long time, but it will keep. If your hair does show a tendency to fade, you have only to dissolve two ounces of tammalite in three ounces of bay rum, and you have a wonderful hair restorer ready for use."

"Why, that seems too good to be true!" exclaimed Ruth. "I must write that down. Now, Estelle, I am going to worry you some more. What kind of complexion cream should I take? I want something that lasts, that doesn't take up much room, and above all, that really does keep one's skin in condition."

"The answer to the riddle is mercolised wax," I replied. "A couple of ounces, such as chemists usually sell, lasts for three or four months; it is solid, compact, and not wasteful to use, and it's the finest complexion beautifier there is. It's great merit is that instead of making the skin dull by clogging the pores with grease, as too many 'face creams' do, it gently absorbs the dull outer tissue, which gets coarsened by hard water, dirt, and so on—and reveals the dazzling freshness of the new skin below. Of course, in a hot climate where the sun and dust tend to ruin even the prettiest skins, it will be simply invaluable. I'll give you another useful tip: be sure to provide yourself with some tablets of stymol; then, if you happen to have a blackhead, you have only to melt one tablet in a little warm water, bathe the blackhead, and you will be able to remove it, without the slightest difficulty, with a clean towel."

"Thanks so much; I'm sure I shall be as grateful as grateful to you when I'm in the wilds of Australia. Of course, I shan't need powder, because since I discovered cleminite I haven't needed it."

"No, you couldn't do better than carry on with cleminite," I assured her. "I can't think why more women don't give up the old-fashioned messy powder and use that nice lotion instead. Well, Ruth, I think you'll blossom in the desert alright, if you are wise and take care of your looks."

"I hope I'll be able to," she said, "because however much one loves adventures and roughing it, I don't want to become a masculine-looking woman. After all, David liked me as he found me, and it's up to me to try and stay the same. I'm afraid my hands will get awfully red with scrubbing and so on," she laughed ruefully, "but still, it's not a big price for so much."

"You needn't suffer that much," I said, "if you use bicrolium jelly to get the dirt out of the cracks and take away the rough red look. When you have massaged them well, dust lightly with a little talc powder, and your hands will stay as pretty and white as they are now."

"I must go," she said, rising; "I don't in the least want to, but there are so many people to see. . . . Will you come and see me off? I sail on Friday fortnight . . . good-bye . . . good-bye . . ."

"Good-bye, Ruth, and the very best of luck to you both . . . write to me, won't you . . . good-bye."

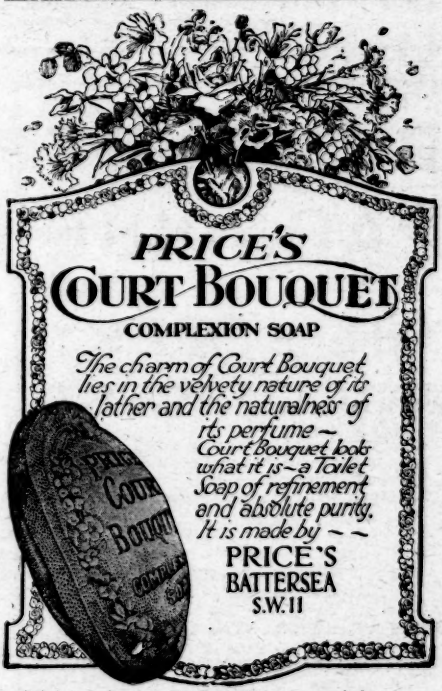
model just arrived from France being exhibited in their world-famous Paris salon. Some of these models almost baffle description in their "allure" and charm. One was a bacchante-like frock of silver tissue, the silver of the skirt being almost hidden by floating draperies of nut-brown tulle held in place round the waist by a pagan-looking wreath of grapes and bronze leaves. The bodice was merely silver tissue, and quite plain. I think the artist must have been standing in a tropical vineyard when he designed it.

Silver shoes and a bandeau of diamonds, or a wreath of tiny green berries, would make an attractive finish. Another beautiful frock that I noticed particularly, and that would suit a very dark-haired woman, was in glorious flame chiffon with large squashed deep-toned poppies sewn carelessly here and there, and reminding one of a glorious sunset whose rays just caught the petals of the roses and poppies in the garden and made them blush a deeper red than they were before. Many of these most attractive frocks were in soft shades of georgette with floating skirt draperies starting at the waist. One was delicious, and would suit the fair-haired girl to perfection, as it was in pale lavendar georgette with a girdle of bright-coloured field flowers. The hard, practical little frock that has to do duty many times and still retain its pristine beauty is also well represented, and some of those carried out in old-world taffetas in delightful great-grandmother colourings are particularly well worth possessing. Harvey Nichols are certainly to be congratulated on their delightful selection of sartorial necessities and luxuries this winter.

Another big firm which is always in the forefront where woman's dress is concerned is making a speciality of frocks and hats for *thés dansants*, of which we are promised a very large number.

Nothing can rival their supple little frocks of woven metal and silk. These are very graceful garments, and are most attractive when knitted gold or silver material is allied to the same in some pale shade of silk. Thus the top of the dress as far as the hips is in the becoming silk, while from the hips downward dull gold or silver is used, and the girdle is probably of the metal, while the sleeves are quite short, which is obviously an advantage when dancing. They are so quickly and easily put on that many people are using them for that restful hour between tea and dinner instead of the teagown that was considered a necessity in the old days. This same firm is specializing in the *dansant* hat—such a charming affair!

Turban shapes are more popular than ever. One wonders if Delysia or any other of the little harem beauties in "Afgar" had anything to do with it. Speaking of these little ladies reminds me of the £25,000 lottery for disabled soldiers that we're all so busy investing in. It is the ambition of at least one man of my acquaintances to win the prize that entitles him to luncheon for two at the Savoy every day for a month, his idea being to invite a different "wife" from Afgar every day! They would at least have a good chance of airing their pretty turbans.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